

OPEN

TO ENTER A

NEW
WORLD

KAMEL HYFNO, NIDANS

2022 Young Writers' Camp

West Chester Writing Project
Young Readers and Young Writers Camp
Summer 2022

From July 11th through the 21st, dynamic and creative learners met at West Chester University for the Young Readers and Young Writers camp. For 40 years, the Young Readers and Young Writers program, sponsored by the West Chester Writing Project at West Chester University, has served the students of various school districts throughout the area. This summer, it provided the context to allow our students to live out their love of reading and to push themselves to explore the many styles and forms of the craft of writing.

The goal of the Young Readers and Young Writer's Program is to inspire students to love reading and writing by introducing them to the tools they need to become better writers. These tools include collecting ideas in a Writer's Notebook, stretching their capabilities in writing and reading, helping them to read like writers and to see themselves as writers with individual voices, unique in their manner of expression. The enthusiasm students demonstrated in the learning of these goals was infectious and their teachers could not be more proud in what they have accomplished in two weeks.

Though students ranged in age, from rising 8th graders to rising tenth graders, they came together to form a true community of learners. This anthology represents the culmination of the hard work and creativity students have demonstrated in attaining the tools of dynamic readers and writers. All the pieces were written and edited by the students of the camp.

We are very grateful to Pauline Schmidt, director of the West Chester Writing Program. Our thanks also goes out to camp director, Abby O'Brien, for all her work assisting and guiding the camp throughout the past two weeks.

Finally, I would like to thank the parents and guardians of the children involved in our camp for their belief in the value of reading and writing and their willingness to nurture a love for both in their children. We all appreciate all your support!

With gratitude,

Greg Maigur

Pennsylvania Writing and Literature Project

Young Readers and Young Writers Camp

Morning Session

Teacher: Greg Maigur

Prani Patel	6th grade	Great Valley School District
Margot Ferrera	7th grade	Methacton Area School District
Aaron Greenslade	7th grade	Greenslade Homeschool
Pranoy Muthaiyan	7th grade	West Chester Area School District
David Feng	7th grade	Tredyffrin Easttown School District
Arlo Tomcavage	7th grade	Great Valley School District
Henry Anstine	7th grade	Malvern Prep
Ana Quinjada	8th grade	Tredyffrin Easttown School District
Jelissa Moldonado	8th grade	Radnor Area School District
Faith Jenkins	8th grade	Downingtown School District
Evan Kriebel	8th grade	West Chester Area School District
Ajay Chakraborty	8th grade	The Haverford School
Muna Ikeme	8th grade	Unionville Chadds Ford School District
Charlotte Anstine	9th grade	Westtown School

This interview is after attempted murder, committed by elana nome. Elana is being interviewed by lavender ocean, an intern at pitcairn PD. Elana attempted to kill her step- daughter as well as her husband.

Elena, you have been convicted for attempted murder, you have been sent here and not before the judge for reasoning i am not permitted to discuss

Your name

Lavender. Lavender Ocean

Right. Now Lavender, may i please know why i was sent here and not before a judge

Did you not just hear me? I'm not permitted to disclose that information

Come on. You can tell your old grandmother, can't you?

You're not my grandmother

But i am

You will never be family. You tried to kill your own daughter. Who may i add isn't your biological daughter

Yes, she is my step-daughter but I still love her very dearly.

Save it. You made moth- her into your slave

There you go, she is your mother and my step-daughter. This makes you my grand- daughter

Don't change the topic. Admit what you did and maybe your sentence will be less long

Alright fine

Did you really wake up that day and want to kill your daughter

It was my step-daugh- you little-

Don't worry. It's all caught on camera. Don't even try to deny any of it.

You can't do this to me

But I can. Thank you so much for your cooperation... grandmother

In the end. Elana was sentenced to death and the world became a much better place

Prani is 12 years-old and is going into 7th grade. She was born and raised in Devon Pa and she attends Great Valley Middle School. She also has a younger sister. She enjoys writing, music, and hanging out with her friends and family.

Chapter One of "Flaming Footsteps"

Timothy called to his parents in the kitchen. "I'm going out to the grocery store!"

(No, of course he wasn't. However, that excuse always worked on them when he was grounded [which he was]. He wondered why it never occurred to them that they could go themselves, but he never asked.)

"Okay, honey," his mom replied. "Buy us some bagels, a loaf of bread, cheese, and lunch meat for the weekend, please!"

"A-okay," he said cheerfully. She'd have to get her groceries on her own time; right now he had MUCH more important matters to deal with. Such as not becoming a reclusive hermit while he was grounded for a whole TWO WEEKS.

As soon as he stepped out onto the Chicago streets, thick fog blocked his view of anything ten yards in front of him. Annoyed, he went back inside to get a flashlight. When he appeared again, he began to trudge in the general direction of the park, hoping he wasn't walking on the street by accident.

Something in his mind clicked. This fog wasn't fog. It smelled. Stank. Horribly. Smoke?

He shrugged and continued walking. If someone's house was burning down, that was their problem, not his. He had more important things to be doing.

A black outline appeared in the smoke. It was coming closer. Timothy kept walking, unfazed, even as he heard the shrieks and screams coming from it. It was a mob of people, he realized as they grew closer still. They were running towards him. He jumped to the inner edge of the sidewalk as they stampeded past, letting out earsplitting moans. Timothy rolled his eyes. How much more dramatic can you get? The last of the people were filtering by, so he continued to walk.

An old woman's face was suddenly inches from his. Her pupils were tiny, and her face was haunted; she looked like she had seen something terrifying. Something clenched around Timothy's wrist, and he looked down to see a wrinkled, trembling hand there.

"HELP ME!" the woman shrieked.

"Get offa me!" Timothy shouted, shaking his arm to try to get rid of her, but her grip was firm with fear.

"Help. HELP!" she screamed.

"I don't want to help you- get OFF!"

“Pleasepleaseplease, please, please, please!”

“No!”

“Someone- some-”

She was choking up. How heart-wrenching. Timothy just wanted her to leave so he could hang out with Mason and Jacob at the park.

“My son’s apartment! SOMEONE SET IT ON FIRE!”

About the Author

Margot is a 13-year-old, going into 8th grade in the fall. She loves reading, writing, and sketching cats. She has been obsessed with the Warriors series by Erin Hunter since the summer of 2020. She also enjoys playing the violin and hanging out with her sister.

The Leaf of Teleportation

By Aaron

This is the story of how my life changed forever. So there I was, walking through the forest on a leisurely stroll. I had just gotten the news that I was accepted into a very prestigious college and was so excited. I was on my way to tell my parents and I knew they were going to be so proud. I was almost there, I could see the end of the woods, but that's when it happened. I saw it. It was a leaf, not really that interesting, right? But there was one thing about the leaf that caught my eye: it was purple. Now, I knew that purple leaves did exist, but they were pretty rare. So, I picked it up and took it with me as a good luck charm and continued on my way. As I walked I envisioned myself walking up to my house, calling my parents down for a family meeting, pretending that I didn't get accepted, but then I would say some really cool line, like: Oh, by the way, I did actually make it in! Then me and my parents would celebrate, and I would go to college and have a great time. And that's when it happened. I was so thrilled with the prospect of telling my parents the good news that I didn't notice the leaf fall out of my pocket and onto the ground. But then I stepped on it, and with a pop and a strange feeling of weightlessness, found myself standing in our living room, directly in front of my parents. Me and my parents stared at each other for a second, and we all burst out laughing.

"What in the heck was that?" my dad said while laughing. I grinned.

"I'm just as confused as you." I held up the leaf. "I picked this up on my way home as a good luck charm for when I go to college." I clapped my hands over my mouth as my parents gasped.

"You mean... you got in?" my mom said, holding her breath. I grinned sheepishly at them.

"Oh by the way, I did actually make it in!" My parents laughed. The effect was obviously lost, but it still sounded good to say. Me and my parents celebrated all afternoon, and my mom made me my favorite meal. Chicken wings, roast potatoes, and carrots. We joked and laughed all night long about my little magic show, but I was still confused. What had happened? Had I fallen asleep and woken up in our living room? Did I have a small memory blackout? Had a wormhole appeared in front of me? Well, probably not that last one. I wrestled with these questions all evening, and just before I went to bed, I decided to test my theory. I went outside, held up the leaf, and concentrated hard on my bedroom. I stared at the strange purple leaf in my hand, and crushed it. With another pop and another feeling of weightlessness, I was suddenly in my bedroom, still holding the now perfectly fine leaf. I gasped. Somehow this leaf gives me the ability to teleport! As this fact sank in, a grin spread across my face. I was gonna have so much fun with this.

About the Author

Aaron is a thirteen year-old boy that is going into 8th grade. He has been homeschooled since kindergarten. He has two younger brothers and one younger sister. He also has two guinea pigs named Oreo and Oliver. His favorite things to do are play video games, read, write, and hang out with his siblings. Aaron wants to be a famous author when he grows up.

So, you've found yourself a talisman eh? Well, that object right there can lock you in quite a dark place in more ways than one. That key you're holding is forged from the snapped blade of an alien hegemon. The blade was designed in such a way that the worst of it's rivals attacks could not damage it, and it could fire blasts of energy that annihilated every war machine thrown at his army. Not a Greek hegemon who can barely take over a single planet, no, an alien hegemon who has nineteen star systems under his belt. That hegemon was defeated a long time ago, and the key crafted from the blade is a coveted object on the alien black market. Bear in mind, these aliens are so advanced that citizens can own their very own planet busting starships, so fighting off these alien kingpins is ill-advised and could spell doom for your vulnerable planet. So, you wring your hands and scream in despair, for when chemical warheads fill the air, there is nothing you can do to stop it. However, if there's anything I've learned from the sorcerers and alchemists of old, there is a simple but alas, not so simple spell you can use to destroy the key and end this cycle of planetary bombardment. Now, this key is indestructible, but it is still metal. If you heat it up, it melts. In order to provide the necessary energy to destroy such an artifact, you would need to use the life source of an unsuspecting animal. That's where the spell comes in. Find a stray cat, preferably a calico, and take it with you to Greece. Once you get to Greece, grow an olive tree there. Take the wood from it and carve it into a bat, which you will then use to knock the cat out. Then, take twenty of the ripest and largest olives from the tree, and feed two to the cat without the pits. Stick the pits up the cat's nose and create olive oil from the remaining eighteen. Save the oil for later, and wow, we sure have a large meal for the cat coming up! Serve the cat four small silver plates of lithium batteries of varying sizes. Then, throw it into the dead sea, and make sure it swims in the water for five full months, and do not allow it to go back on land. Only feed the cat milk made from a squid's ink sac and the flesh of a patagonian toothfish seasoned with comet dust. Then, shave the top of the cat's head bald, and pour a dab of your olive oil onto it. Wait for it to rain, and then naturally, because of how oil interacts with water, the cat will float. When it floats, repeat the phrase, "I shall not shave anymore cats bald, unless I rob a house and find nothing valuable," over and over. (You do not have to listen to this phrase, shave as many cats as you like, no one's stopping you.) After that, the cat will be filled with so much energy (Owed to the magic not the lithium batteries) that a lightspeed beam will come out of its mouth every three seconds. Focus the beam onto the key. And presto! The key is destroyed and neither you nor the cat will have to smell the fumes of an alien fallout. But heed these words of caution, if you mess up a single step, the cat will follow you for the rest of your life and wallop you with a broomstick every time you visit wikipedia.

Why yes I got this advice from a craigslist psychic, how did you know?

About the author:

Pranoy is 24 years old, and is going into 8th grade at the West Chester Area School District. He likes to write, draw, and build sculptures out of anything he can get his hands on. He offers you important words of advice in these trying times.

"Don't believe everything you see on the internet because there's a quote and random historical figure next to it."

- Charles J. Guiteau

Talisman

I was going along one day when you know what I saw? A rusted, dirty, nasty, weird, gross, disgusting key! So I did what everyone else would do, and picked the thing up. The second I touched that key, I was looking up to find myself in a dusty, dark, odd, creepy, probably haunted jail. I couldn't see a couple feet in front of me, and I told the key to turn on the non-existent lights.

"The bruh man, there aren't any lights!" the key exclaimed.

I frowned at the key. "Turn it on or I'm going to throw you onto the floor and smash you."

"Ok, man, chill!"

So the non-existent lights went on and I ventured throughout the prison. At one point, I heard a creepy noise, and just like everyone else in that situation, I decided to follow the noise. I found myself staring at a cat the size of the cell itself, and decided to free it, using the key I found.

"Vaaaaaaaaaaaaait!!"

"What?" I said.

"I don't wanna go in there!"

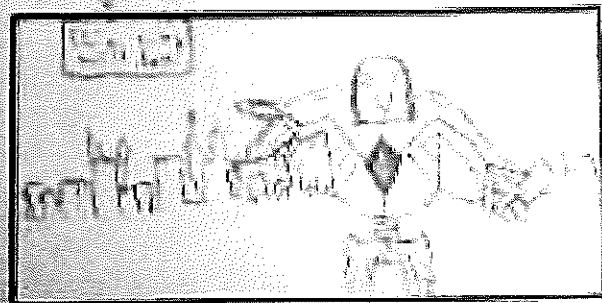
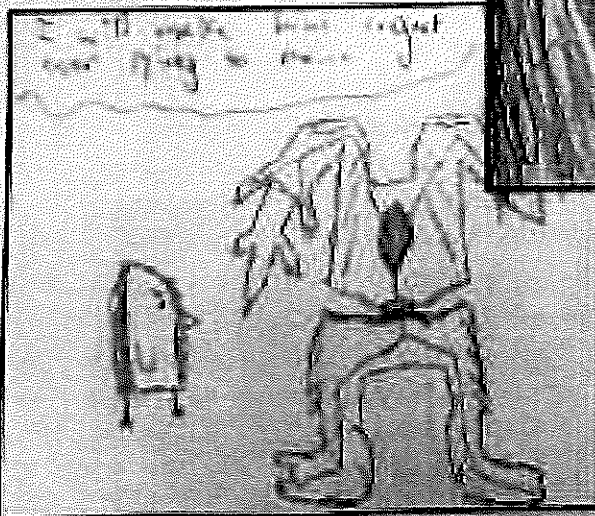
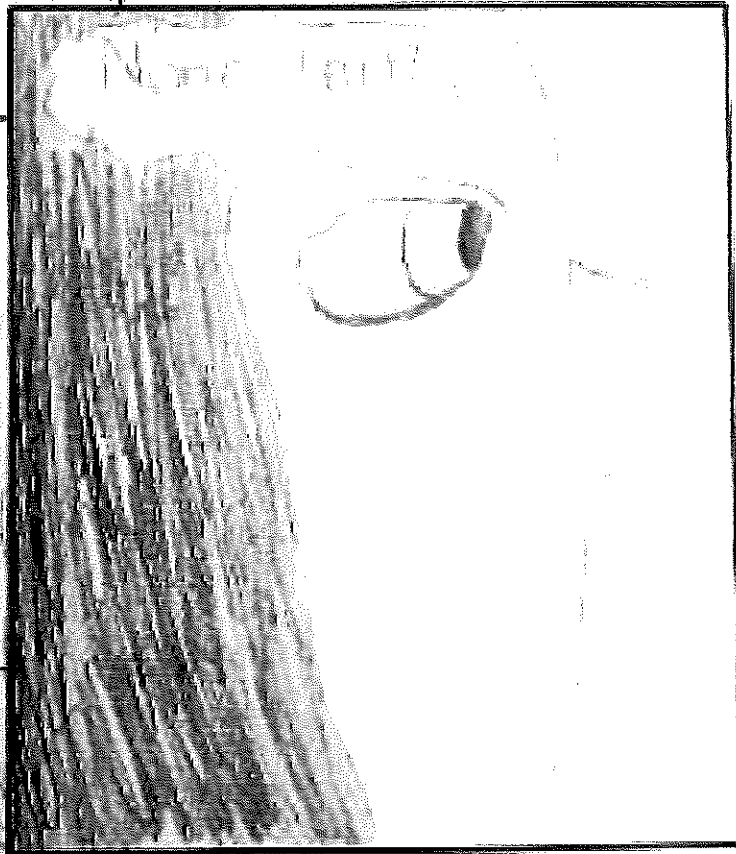
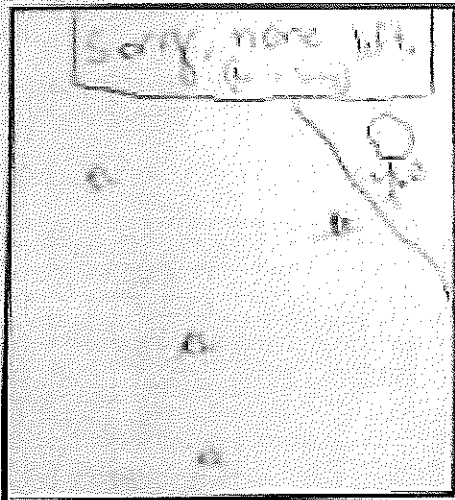
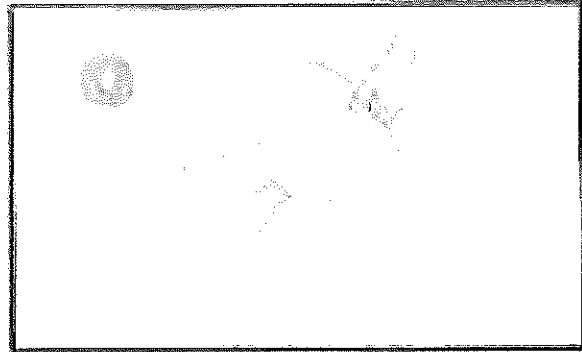
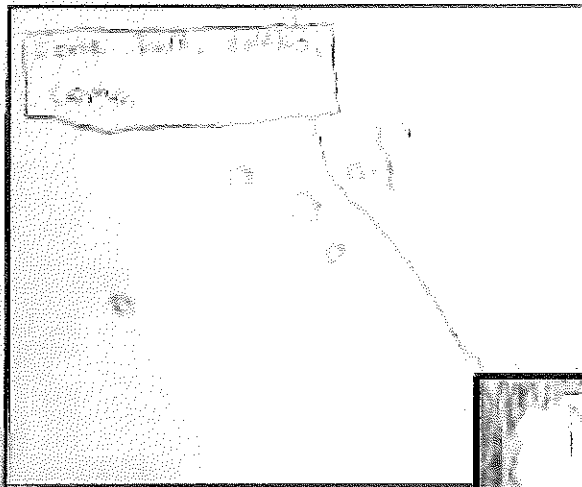
"Yeah, whatever," I proceeded to plunge the key in the lock.

He came out sputtering, but at least the cat was free. He promised to show me the exit with sign language, and I followed the cat to the exit. So I used the GPS to walk

for another three days to my home, and plopped myself down and watched TV, while the key started mumbling about how the show I was watching was horrible.

About the Author

David is twelve years of age and is going into eighth grade at Tredyffrin-Easttown Middle School. He enjoys baseball as a hobby, along with video games and being outside. He loves to do various stunts that could hurt if done incorrectly, but he always has a saying; go big or go home. He has a younger brother who is nine, and has two loving and caring parents.



Arlo Tomcavage, 13 years old, currently lives in Pennsylvania. They have an older sister and two amazing parents. Writing has always been a big part in his life. When he was little, Arlo had to write extremely small in order to fit all the letters on the page. Writing is his outlet for emotions and feelings. When you write, you connect with the reader. And that is exactly what Arlo intends to do. When Arlo is not writing, he enjoys rowing and reading. When he grows up, an author or welder would be the most fun jobs Arlo could have. Although he is a wizard when it comes to math, Arlo finds it his least favorite school subject. On the topic of school, he is going into 8th grade and not looking forward to it. Even though he is truly a protege and a genius, Arlo doesn't like school.

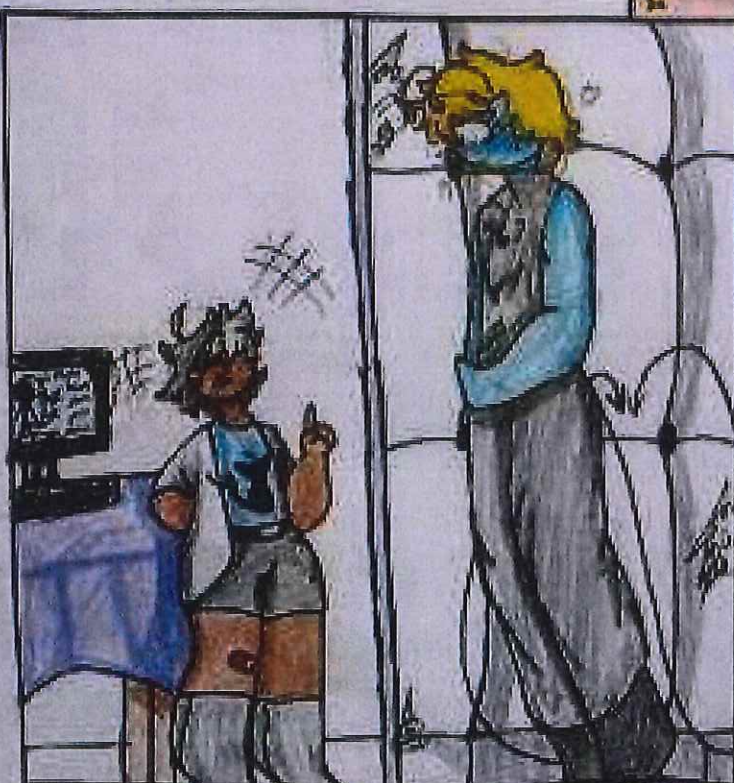
Something I remember from a long time ago was me going off the diving board for the first time, I was about 3. I loved swimming back then and I still do. I used to swim about every day when I was younger. I also touched the bottom of the pool which was twelve feet deep. My grandfather was there and said "I don't think he's ok" to my mom. My mom said "He's fine, he will come up when he needs air. I swam up and when I came up I said "I touched it the bottom!" I remember I saw everyone going off the diving board and I really wanted to do it. I was at my Country Club in Paoli, sadly we're not members anymore. It was really noisy with splashes everywhere and people talking but when I was touching the bottom there was a lot of pressure on my ears and I just heard bubbles from me blowing my air out. It smelled like a nice warm summer day with a little bit of a food smell. I felt water all over me when I jumped in and when I touched the bottom. I tasted chlorine from being in the pool and possibly an aftertaste from ice cream.

Henry is 13 and he is going into 8th grade at Malvern prep. Henry loves swimming competitively, playing video games, and being with friends. Henry has one older sister and he loves his parents. He has 3 dogs one of which he trains to do things like agility

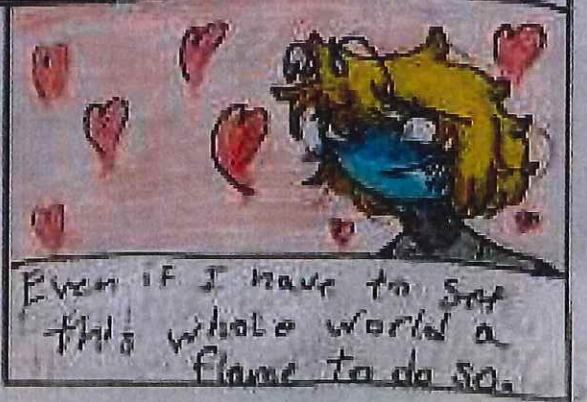
Julissa M.

Villan

Origin Story



Because I will find her.



Jelissa is a fourteen year-old girl, currently going to ninth grade. She really enjoys art and history, like the Toledo War (the reason why she hates Ohio). However, reading and writing were always little hobbies she enjoyed as well. But when her mother found out, she was randomly placed into this writing camp. No, Jelissa was not pleased about it. Afterall, like most things, she was informed at the last minute about joining.

But she did have a fun time and would consider returning next year

White Coat Syndrome

The lights flickered.

On. Off. On. Off.

The room is all white, from the popcorn ceiling, to the bed, to the tiled floor, right down to the very bed. The only flashes of color are from the machine lights.

It's maddening.

I sat up from my bed, my paper gown crinkling with my every move. A shot of pain went through my head, pounding deep within my skull.

I groaned, and tried to push through the unyielding pain. Rising to my feet, I felt the cold tile floor, it sent a chill straight through me. The room was empty besides the bed I awoke on, the beeping medical equipment, and a rickety-looking plastic white chair.

There is only one window, the shades were drawn, cloaking the outside world. I moved to open the shades, desperate to break the bleakness of the hospital room.

I shoved the shades aside to see...

Nothing.

Pitch black. Darkness leaked into the room like how sunlight ought to. Rays of darkness beamed into the room, cloaking the room more and more.

In a panic, I rush to the door, throwing myself upon it.

"Help! Help me, anyone!" My voice comes out as a hoarse whisper. Like I'd been screaming for hours beforehand.

The door gave way to my weight, making me tumble into the hallway. I hurriedly slammed the door shut, hoping to trap the darkness. I braced the door with my back, hoping my measly body weight would be enough to hold the darkness back.

I held my breath waiting for the darkness to slither out from underneath the door.

Nothing came. I gave a sigh of relief. I relaxed and slid down the door. The hallway looked like it went on forever, lined with infinite doors to inhabitants' rooms.

"Hello?" I called down the hallway, my voice was still a little less than a whisper. No response. The lights continued to flicker within the hallway.

On. Off. On. Off.

I wandered around the seemingly abandoned clinic. Then I heard it.

Footsteps.

A mixture of emotions flooded over me, joy, excitement, and a bit of surprise. I hurried over to the sound. I entered a waiting room of some kind. An outdated carpet lined the floor, once white walls had yellowed over time and held dulled prints of nature and landscapes. The reception desk was framed with crumpled children's drawings, made with crayon or markers.

A woman in a nurse's uniform stepped out from behind the reception desk, and swiftly walked to a door on the other side of the room.

"Wait!" I called after her, with no use, my throat aching in protest.

I hurried after her, catching the door.

"Come back-" I scanned the room quickly for the woman I saw earlier, only to be met with surprise.

About thirty nurses, doctors, and other healthcare workers milled around something.

I craned my neck to see what they were circling.

I quietly gasped as I saw a delicate human hand from between the doctor's feet. I held my hand over my mouth to hold back a scream as I managed to see more glances of human body parts from within the circle of medical workers. The fabric of long white coats, and blue scrubs just as quickly as they appeared, covered up the viewing points of the absolute horror.

I stumbled backwards towards the door, my back hit the cold metal door. I fumbled with my off hand to grab the handle. My hand slipped from the handle, it made a loud spring sound, echoing in the quiet room. It caught the attention of a few circling physicians and nurses, who stopped promptly in their tracks. Gaps opened up in the circle, showing more of the pile of lifeless corpses, all in blue and white paper gowns.

They cocked their heads and looked directly at me, my stomach dropped, their eyes were pitch black, soulless, just like outside the window.

Their bodies started to jerk violently, they let out an ear-splitting screech. Then they started to change:

Their eyes bulged and grew glossy, leaking a black liquid out of the sockets. Their limbs drooped and melted, becoming longer. Their skin grew wrinkled and withered. Worst of all, their necks stretched and twisted, spinning their heads around and around, always keeping their black eyes locked on me.

My hands shook as I tried again for the handle, this time successful, I launched the door open and ran as fast as my legs could carry me.

The only sound in the endless hallway was my heavy breathing and bare feet hammering on the cold tile floor, making a loud echoing sound in the empty, flickering hallway.

I found a nearby operating room, tumbling through the door and quickly locking it behind me. I sat down on the numbingly cold floor, my back to the door and buried my face in my knees.

"You're safe. You're safe. You're safe." I mumbled to myself, trying to calm myself down. I looked up at the ceiling, watching the flashing lights, pacing my breathing to the flickers.

On. Off. On. Off.

I peeked behind me, outside the door window, and threw myself forward away from the door.

The face of one of those monsters was face to face with me, only separated with a mere pane of glass. Its skin audibly crinkled and cracked as its face contoured into a grin.

Black liquid leaking out of its mouth, its teeth were crooked, rotted and stained black.

A complete abanation.

As if it heard my thoughts, its face twisted into a terrifying grimace. Its lips curled up in disgust, its black eyes narrowed, causing even more liquid to pour out of its eye sockets.

It stared at me for a second, then reared its long, twisted neck back and threw it at the glass dividing us. The glass shattered into bits. The monster pushed its head through the narrow window, its skull cracking to fit through the small space. It grinned again and lunged towards me.

I couldn't move, I was frozen in fear, petrified. Darkness consumed me. I was dead, no doubt about it.

"-ake up! Wake up!"

I shot up. I was sitting in my hospital room again. It was different this time, people stood over me: a middle aged woman in a white doctor coat and a young man in blue scrubs with a clipboard.

"How are you feeling?" The woman asked, in a steady clear voice.

"Scared," I replied instantly, scanning the room for more monsters.

She glanced at the man, who scribbled something down on his clipboard. He then looked up at me and offered a friendly smile. Then I swear I saw it- only for a moment- his face glitched, his skin wrinkled and withered, eyes pitch black and leaking fluid.

I laughed maniacally.

About the Author

Faith is currently going into 9th grade at Downingtown STEM Academy. Faith has always had an overactive imagination that she now tries to put to good use by doing anything creative. She credits finding her love for writing after reading *The Lottery* by Sherily Jackson and *The Tell Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe. In her free time, she enjoys hanging out with friends and family, watching movies of every kind (besides romance), and of course- writing horror short stories.

City of Insanity: The Anthology

Winterbrook, New York, USA. The forgotten city. The ignored city. Best known as the city of insanity. Ever since the Farlane murders, the police in this city haven't been able to rest. Kenneth Farlane. He was abused and bullied his whole childhood until he eventually saw society in a new way. He saw his family and these kids who had harassed him as an immature threat to the rest of society. From then on, he believed anyone who showed such immaturity deserved to be taken off of this planet, which is what he made happen. Anybody who he felt would never show maturity, he ruthlessly killed. He was truly insane, but he always managed to keep a low profile, so the cops would never find him. Sometimes they did find him, and he would do to them what he did to everyone else. Farlane saw himself as one who would die having fixed society, but every time he committed a murder, he got even more twisted, dangerous, and mentally insane. He had killed countless innocents, and there were wanted signs all over Winterbrook with his face on them. However, the police had had enough of Farlane. One man specifically, Captain Andrew Whitfield, had a plan that he told nobody about. Farlane, however, qualified as mentally insane and wasn't able to get the death penalty. Whitfield had been disgusted by this, and strongly believed that this killer needed to pay. One dark night, the police encountered Farlane committing a murder in an abandoned warehouse. Commissioner Jack Nolan was present, and ordered the serial killer to put his hands down and stay on the ground. He was slowly obeying their orders, when Captain Whitfield took the shot. He put a bullet through Kenneth Farlane, ending his life. But before anyone could make a move, Whitfield was on the run. Andrew Whitfield was done being a police captain, and was ready to avenge everyone who had been killed. He stole files on victims and other cases of murder and other unforgiveable crimes. He gathered supplies that he would need to survive and built a bunker that he would live in for the rest of his life, while at the same time killing anyone he could find who had purposely committed anything as bad as murder. He left

clues at the site of all his victims' killings. These clues would eventually lead to the location of the key to his bunker, which was inside the coffin of Kenneth Farlane. Inside his bunker were the resources that he had been gathering and stealing from anywhere he could, and all the files he had stolen from the Winterbrook Police Department Archives. The police had been searching for the clues to the key, but he had decoys as well, that were at the sites of murders not committed by him, and these decoys were able to stall the police enough for Whitfield to live in his bunker for a while. Occasionally he would come out into the woods to get some more resources, but he had no healthcare, and he eventually died of old age. He had died laughing that nobody ever found him. Laughing that the case of Captain Andrew Whitfield had never been solved. Laughing that overall, his life had been a success. To this day, nobody has figured out the location of the key or the bunker. Winterbrook, the city of insanity is never at peace and is filled with crime, hate and corruption. The Farlane and Whitfield cases were the two biggest cases of all time in the city of insanity and nobody has ever come to a conclusion on either of them. Some saw Whitfield as a hero who was right all along, and some saw him as a potentially good man who went too far.

Evan is currently 14 years old and is going into 9th grade at Henderson High School. He loves to read Marvel and DC comics, watch movies and TV, draw, listen to music, and play video games. He is a big fan of Marvel, DC, Star Wars, Stranger Things, and more.

The Talisman

It was my first day at work at the Vinculum Corrections Facility. I had just completed 18 months of training, and I was ready to finally get started. I jumped out of bed at 6 am, took a shower, and put on my uniform. I drove to Vinculum, and went into the room with the jail cell keys. My job was to unlock Prisoner 29038. He was an amateur armed robber who got caught on his second robbery. I was trained for this, and I was given an easy task. I got his key out of the bin that his key was in. Along with the key to the cell, there was also a rusted, mysterious key. I took the key with me to show to the warden later. I reached the cell and unlocked the door.

"Hey, head to that line over there," I said.

"You got it boss," he said.

He got up and headed to the line that the other prisoners were in. I then headed to the warden's office. When I walked in, the warden was frantically looking for something.

"Need any help?"

"No, it's nothing," he said.

"Doesn't seem like nothing," I said. "Anyways, I found this weird key in the bin for my inmate. Here it is."

The warden had a look of relief as soon as he saw the key. "Oh thank god. Put it back where it was."

"Ok," I said. "What's this about?"

The warden sighed. "You know The Ghoul?"

"Yeah, the serial killer. He's in a supermax in Colorado."

"Well, not exactly. That's what we told the public."

"Well then where is he?"

"In a basement 20 floors below us," he said.

"Wait, The Ghoul's in Vincium?"

"Yes, he is," he said sternly. "Now put that key back where it was immediately."

"Yes sir," I said.

I walked back to the key room and opened the bin. I reached into my pocket to get the key, but it wasn't there.

Dorothy Moment

Robert and Dillon followed Edward and Axel into the base. For Robert, it was easily the coolest thing that he had ever seen. There was a huge spaceship, multiple flying saucers and hundreds of high-tech computers. Dillon thought it was a joke being played on him by his friends.

"Wow, there are UFOs here," Robert said.

"They're called IFOs," Axel responded.

"IFOs?"

"Identified flying objects," Edward said. "We know what they are, so they're not unidentified. But they're still flying objects."

"Okay..." Robert said. "So NASA made all this?"

"Yep," Axel said. "That's why NASA fell so far behind SpaceX in the public eye. Because they were working on this masterpiece behind the scenes."

Dillon finally spoke. He jokingly said "What, to prevent the little green men from storming the motherland?"

"They're not all green," Edward said. "And they're taking over the multiverse as we speak."

"Cooooooooool," Robert said. "Aliens are real."

"This is just another random conspiracy theory," Dillon said. "How many tax dollars did you waste on this dump?"

Axel got mad. "Look, kid. I don't like your attitude. You have been given an opportunity, and I suggest you take full advantage. Or else..."

"Or else what," Dillon said sarcastically. "You'll kill me?"

"You're in too deep to just be kicked out," Edward said. "And if Axel wants you out of here, you will be out of here."

"Who set this up," Dillon said, trying to be intimidating. "Peter? Johnny? Sam?"

Edward then replied, "We have files on all of your friends. Do you really think anyone with the IQ of 64, 68, or 71 could pull this off?"

"Fine, I guess you're right," Dillon said.

"That's what I like to hear," Axel said as they all proceeded into the conference room.

About the Author

Ajay is 14 years old and is going into 9th grade at The Haverford School. He enjoys golf, basketball, and math. He lives in Bryn Mawr with his parents, and his older brother is a rising senior at Duke University.

Nightmare in Marsbury

My eyes struggled to stay open, glued to the familiar view of pale green trees and bumpy sidewalks that passed me by against the car window. I decided to rest for only a moment, unexcited reluctance washing over me as we inched closer and closer to the town of Marsbury, visiting grandmother Lina this summer. She was a nice lady, though I haven't known her long –when mother married this new guy, Arthur, I wasn't expecting to go visit his parents so quickly. I opened one eye and couldn't help but understand my mother's excitement. Her fingers played against the window while she smiled at nothing much at all, humming ever so softly once in a while. The sight out of the window caught my single open eye. Bright rays of sun almost blinded me as they danced through shadows in the car while thin, silvery clouds whispered around them. The road was smooth and the sidewalks straight with the occasional little kid on a bike zooming past, but never too fast for a mother to scold him. Lush grass lined the ground to odd symmetrical perfection, and the houses were tidy and looking down at you as if to say hello. I ignored the soft chill of wind that grasped my hair, enthralled by the –almost unsettling– flawlessness of this town. I flinched at the window that suddenly began to roll down, glancing at my mother questioningly. She didn't look back, grinning with extreme delight at Arthur, who returned the same toothy smile.

“Just some nice, fresh air, Angeline,” My mother inhaled deeply, with a smile still plastered on her face. “It's so nice! Arthur agrees, now doesn't he.” She prods, now turning her head towards him, golden brown hair swaying in the sun. I cock my head at her.

“I never said it wasn't nice..” The wind blew harder, hair now obstructing my view as the car began to speed up slightly.

“She never said it wasn't nice!” Arthur repeated and laughed as if I had just told my best joke. Mother looked at him again.

“Ahh, Arthur! You crack me up.” She replied, hitting his shoulder a few times. They were laughing in unison now. I cringed a bit at how cheesy they were being. Since when did she say

“crack me up”? They were both a little overexcited in my opinion, but I guess I understood, just married after all. Maybe that was it? I stared at their tightly crinkled eyes for a moment before shaking it off. The car slowed now, I felt eyes on me as we came to a red light, a young girl –maybe three or four– was staring at me. A lady who was most likely her mom followed her gaze. Pink tricycle handle in one hand, the little girl began to wave at me excitedly, grinning from ear to ear. Slowly, the mother began to mimic her hyperactive daughter, waving at me with the same toothy smile that was only normal for a young child. The whole block began to stare, following suit, staring and waving at me like they were programmed to. My initial chuckle faltered. I looked away as the light turned green, what was that? I sat in the silence of this sunny car for a while, wondering if I was going insane. I squinted, now shielding myself from the overbearing sun and forceful wind that blew from the accelerating speed of the car.

“Everyone seems so nice here,” Mother was looking back at me as I startled at her interjection of my thoughts. “I know you’ll love it!” We were moving undoubtedly fast now, without a sign of the car stopping, and I wished silently that it would slow, maybe that would ease the unsettled feeling that slowly dawned upon me during the last few minutes.

“Um,” I started. Arthur and mom looked back at me immediately. “How long are we staying here again?” They looked to each other blankly for a moment, before bursting out in a bout of laughter once more. The sound startled me now, their laughs were lost in the gusts of wind that surrounded me, in the abhorrent caw of birds that flew over us in the perfect V-shape. “How long?” I asked again, raising my voice slightly. I was met with an eerie silence as their laughter ceased. I looked back out the window into this perfect town, anywhere but at their faces. Arthur was driving without looking at the road, his now cold eyes glued to me. Mother’s neck was craned to stare at me from the passenger seat in an almost inhuman way. My hands shook.

“Nevermind that,” I breathed. They smiled one last time as the car began to reach unsafe speeds, and the nightmare in Marsbury began.

About the author

Muna is a fourteen-year-old going to ninth grade at Unionville High School. She can often be found reading, talking to friends, out on a walk, or watching shows & movies! She lives with her mom, dad, older sister, and younger brother. Muna loves books, music, pink, clothes, bunnies, and writing, of course. She's hoping to continue writing throughout high school and have fun doing it!

How to Identify Golf by Sound

July Hiku

WHOOSH The ball flies off the clubface

July- warm summer

THWUMP a chunk of grass rips from the ground

Christmas in July hot, hot

CLINCHUK the face hits the equator of the ball

no one is around

WHOOSH The ball flies off the clubface

TINKAP the ball rolls off the putter face

TATAT the ball hits the flagstick going right in

WHOOSH The ball flies off the clubface

THWUMP a chunk of grass rips from the ground

Oh. The Poor Crabs

Crabs, with their claws and little legs

Crabs, blueish orange but, turn red as their temperature rises

Crabs, become limb and edible from the hot bubbling water

Crabs, so good, so delicious

Crabs, crack them open with a knife

Crabs, dripping with butter

Crabs, little kids try to smash them open with hammers

Crabs, when they need their parents to do it for them

Crabs, dismantled and disassembled

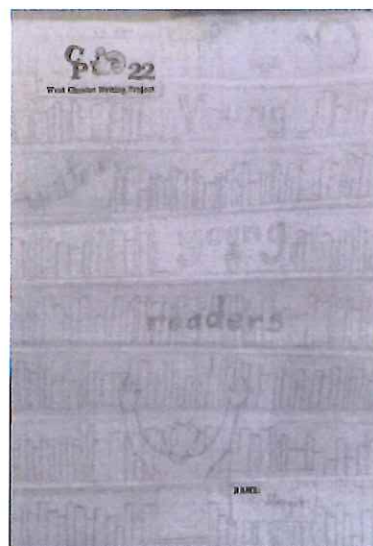
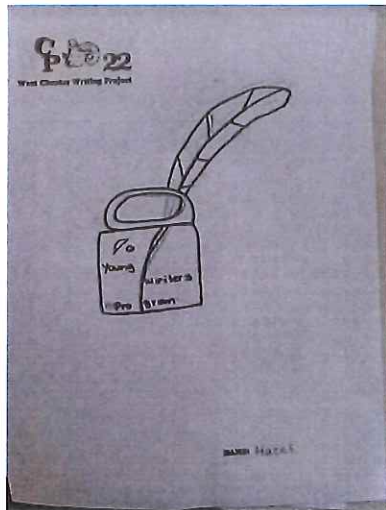
Oh

The poor crabs.

so tall
all feathery
extremely bright
extremely feathery
near the sand castle
long, calm, decorated
plumy wings flap, faint
ever so rosey summer
very pink though
lengthy a beak
wings speaks
rosy! wadding
bright lengthy!
pink somewhere
blood red
a flamingo
feathery! very lengthy
stick legs near the sand castle
a flamingo light, rhetorical, lanky
a flamingo light, feathered, chromatic
contented its feathered wings flap, faint
very pink feathered wings fluttering, faint
all rosey light, rhetorical, smart, feathered
lengthy stick legs, feathery wings, silent peck
lengthy stick legs, feathered wings, placid peck
lengthy stick legs, featherlike wings, silent beak
lengthy stick legs, featherlike wings, soft nozzle
lengthy stick legs, decorated wings, quiescent beak
lengthy stick legs, feathered wings, quiescent nozzle
lengthy stick legs, feathered wings, quiescent nozzle
lengthy stick legs, decorated wings, quiescent hooter
long, feathered, marvelous, chromatic beautiful a
its feathery wings flopping, faint flamingo
light, rhetorical, marvelous are
light, calm, rhetorical
positively bright
decidedly pink
ever so quiet
whilst a beak
could summer
begin pink!
alive pink!
could cause
night about
young summer
tall strong
pink flamingo
pink! beautiful
rather bright
stick legs
flapping
lengthy!
feathery!
like red
pink hot
crazy all
about the
red red
pink and
in you
see
the
hot
rosy
a flamingo
rather quiet
beautiful

About the Author

Charlotte is soon to be 16 and is going into 10th grade at Westtown. Charlotte enjoys playing golf and is at the golf course 24/7. Charlotte lives with her parents and younger brother Henry. She also lives with her three dogs.



Pennsylvania Writing and Literature Project

Young Readers and Young Writers Camp

Afternoon Session

Teacher: Greg Maigur

Eric Xu	9th grade	Tredyffrin Easttown School District
Anna Nam	9th grade	West Chester Area School District
Brooke Woo	9th grade	The Baldwin School
Luke Malaczewski	9th grade	Strathaven School District
Karthik Nair	9th grade	Downingtown Area School District
Hazel Roane	9th grade	Downingtown Area School District

Xerces

Xerces, a 2019 American action/drama by award winning director, Adam Sandler, is about a boy named Thomas. Thomas, or more commonly known as Tho, is a rebellious boy, outgrowing his roots and finding new adventures in his daily life. With the sudden death of his sister, Makayla, Tho is thrown into dismay. With the last member of his family gone, Tho has lost all passion and goals in his life. Wandering around the slums without purpose, Tho meets a strange girl, Raven, who will change the course of his life. Tho does not know whether he should trust this new person, but without anything else relevant in his life, he decides to follow her.

Meeting Raven's strange friends, Tho wants to join the new group, but has to prove himself worthy first. To prove himself worthy, Raven's friends decide to make him break into a crazed inventor's home and steal his plunger. Finally building up enough courage to break into the inventor's house, Tho sneaks his way around the maze-like hallways, finally finding his way into the bathroom. Inside the bathroom, he reaches for the plunger, but then, something hits him, and he blacks out. When he comes back to consciousness, he is greeted by a scary-looking face. Tho struggles to escape, but he realizes he is tied to a chair, with no way of moving any of his limbs. The inventor paces around Tho, and finally asks what he was doing, thinking about stealing his prized possession. Confused, Tho inquires why the plunger is the inventor's prized possession.

Moving into a monologue, the inventor lyrically describes the journey of his life, and the massive role the plunger played in it. Apparently, the plunger was the only friend he had in his trying times, and it had secret magical powers. The plunger allowed him to bring anything he wanted to into existence, but at a price. The price was his prized collection of cheese puffs shaped like famous people. Every time he brought something into existence, one of the cheese

puffs disappeared. Unaware of this at first, the inventor wished for things at random, like a larger cabinet to keep his cheese puffs. The inventor's story was so boring that Tho fell asleep and forgot the rest.

Pitying the inventor, and also wanting to run away at the same time, Tho talked about his story and how he lost his family. The inventor also pitied him and set him free. After the long endeavor, Tho hurriedly ran back to find Raven and her friends, but they had disappeared? How long had he stayed in the inventor's house? Everything around him had changed, everything seemed more rustic with it looking like he had gone back in time. Suddenly, he saw torches and a horde of people running towards him and accusing him of being a witch. What time was he in? Running away, Tho found safety in a forest, and stayed for the night. Waking up, he found himself in a house, the inventor's house, but it looked newer. What had happened?

Searching the house, he found no trace of anyone else living there, and when he left the house, it still wasn't his original time, but still ahead of the time he had just been in. Searching the house again, he saw a peculiar plunger in the bathroom, but paid it no heed. Searching deeper, he found that there was a fortune hidden in his house! Feeling a strange urge to buy bags upon bags of cheese puffs, and look for uniquely shaped ones, he went out to find some, and decided on finally pursuing his passion as an inventor.

Eric is 15 years old and going into 10th grade in the upcoming school year. He enjoys listening to music, playing games, and sleeping

A Key to a New Start

Jace squirmed her eyes and looked up at her new home as a bead of sweat trickled down her neck. A new record of 130 degrees fahrenheit melted San Jose, California. The metal fence surrounding the property had rusted, and the front door creaked an eerie welcome as Jace entered. Inside, spiders made homes in the corner of the windowsill, and a waft of moth balls made Jace gag. Her dad followed behind, dropping her two suitcases with a sigh. "Go on up, and find a room to settle in," he gasped out of breath. Dad hadn't been the same after Grandpa died. He thought moving back into his childhood house would encourage him, but Jace doubted it. How could anyone enjoy living in this rotting nest?

Carefully creeping up the stairs, Jace spotted a bedroom she could see herself settling in. A wooden bedframe held up a mattress with unidentifiable yellow stains. Jace pulled the mattress out of its frame and pushed it out of the room, unable to look at it any longer. Panting, she entered again imagining where her full-body mirror and make-up desk would go. As sunlight washed in through the window, a piece of metal glimmered, reflecting the light. Peering inside the bed frame laid a key. Jace cautiously picked it up, questioning what it could possibly open. Not letting her eyes drift away from it, she raced down the stairs and out the door where her dad was still unloading their luggage. "Dad! Look what I found!" she exclaimed. Her dad's frown and regretful face quickly changed into a smile.

"I thought that key was lost, where'd you find it?"

"Under the bed. Do you know where it goes?"

"Follow me."

Jace followed her dad into the house and living room where an old wooden piano stood. On the side of the piano was a small hole, just the size and shape of the key. Jace inserted it, her curiosity killing her. Her dad beamed as he opened the piano lid displaying a flood of old photographs – Black and white photos of her father running around the house with his brother, the boys attempting to cook in the kitchen with smoke spewing out of the oven, and the brothers peering into a loosened floorboard where pokemon cards and dog sitting money were stashed, and her grandpa sitting on the piano bench singing and laughing. Seeing all the memories, all the life that once lived in the house made Jace wonder if she could bring it back. Maybe this wasn't a rotting nest after all but a home where memories were made and yet to come.

About the Author

Anna is 15 years old and a rising Sophomore. She enjoys staying active outside, running track or dribbling a soccer ball. In her free time, Anna loves to read books, bake (brownies are her favorite), practice the flute, and watch Netflix. One of Anna's favorite places is the beach where the ocean always waves and the sun shines bright. Lastly, Anna is an Eagles fanatic and enjoys watching the game with her family.

something is wrong, he knows, but he doesn't yet know what. a tall, lonely door lies before him, an empty hallway behind, and everything within him is *screaming* at the sheer *wrongness* of it all. he has made his choice, he tells himself – he cannot turn back now.

(there is red, so much red, trailing from his fingertips with an awful metronomic drip-drip-dripping sound onto the once-pristine floors. his hands twitch involuntarily, spraying the walls.)

there is light streaming in from under the door, reaching just shy of where he stands. he wants to touch it. could he drown himself in its harsh brightness? his mind whispers, cutting through the senseless cacophany of his thoughts. could he reach out and touch, cleanse himself in its sterile purity, or–

would he burn?

(crisp to ashes, as does a single hair exposed to a furious inferno? would he be washed out and away, a slim shadow daring to cast itself over the face of the burning sun?)

he does not know, and he finds he does not have it within himself to care. what more has he to lose, now that everything is gone? he has nothing left but himself, the product of a thousand failures, and everything to gain.

(he is resolved, finally, and something terrible and soft and deafened within him sputters out and dies.)

he opens the door, and he is set aflame.

it hurts, the whispers cry, *it hurts, it hurts* - he *burns* from the inside out, but he welcomes it as the light destroys him, makes him anew. he falls to his knees, a worshipper's prostration, and simply lets himself melt to nothingness in the presence of a being so *other* he knows it must be god. perhaps, if he still cared enough to know, he might wonder if he should feel pain, watching his skin and muscles and bones return to the dust they once were in the deluge of piercing sanctity. as it is, he is wholly captivated in his own transmutation of lead to pure, pure gold, and his thoughts lend nary a moment to the red staining his arms flaking and dissolving away with him.

he is absolved, finally, of his sins with the stripping of his mortal flesh. he welcomes the endless light as it embraces him in return, and in this new, brutally ethereal plane, he finds his consciousness finally, *finally*, slipping away to ceaseless, perfect silence.

i am home, he thinks.

(he is returned to nothingness, made utterly insignificant once more.)

about the author

as of the summer of 2022, brooke is fifteen years old and preparing for her sophomore year of high school. she greatly enjoys reading and writing, but is otherwise somewhat unsure as to why she is here.

brooke lives with her father, mother and younger sister in media, pennsylvania. she is an avid disapprover of the oxford comma and expects to remain that way.

Thump, thump, thump.

The pacing of stomping feet grew louder and louder, on beat with the frantic cursing Echo whispered aloud. Muffled orders could barely be heard beneath the soundboards, but their volume steadily increased with every second that passed. Hurriedly, Echo threw open the lid to his "new" laptop and punched in the password. If he had known fishing this computer from the police station dumpster would have caused this much trouble, he would have slammed it against his knee and snapped it in two. But he didn't, and now the police or whatever law enforcement was about to whoop his sorry ass was in his home. He knew his luck was bad, but this was just pushing the envelope.

The laptop's loading bar taunted him, moving at a snail's pace. Echo drummed his fingers against the keyboard, praying that his pursuers wouldn't reach him before the computer booted up. Whatever gods resided above must have heard him and laughed, because no sooner than he had wished that did three sharp knocks pound at his bedroom door. They were here. The door didn't last a second against the mechanical whirring of their hydraulic press, which frankly Echo thought was a tad excessive. A stream of bodies flooded into the room, faces and body armor-covered uniforms obscured by the midnight darkness. The blinding beams of flashlights pointed in his direction, along with the rifles they were mounted atop. Several gruff voices yelled at Echo to drop the computer or else.

He wasn't quite sure why the "or else" was added. Staring at the muzzles of the guns, he could guess the alternative well enough.

The gods finally decided to stop laughing at his predicament and let the loading bar finish. Discreetly, Echo moved a pointer finger across the touchpad and opened a search browser. His head wasn't riddled with bullets yet. So far, so good. He maneuvered his hand across the keyboard, typing in the letters U-Z-I followed by Enter with infinite stealth. Or at least he thought it was stealthy, since the guards had taken notice and yelled at him once more, their voice overlapping and becoming incoherent shouting.

While the cacophony continued, images of what Echo had typed filled the screen. At the same moment, one of the guards finally had enough sense to try and slap some handcuffs on him. Echo raised one hand in mock surrender... and shot the other at the computer's screen. Or, rather, *through* the screen. His hand passed into the laptop, ripples bouncing around the image like the parting of water. Echo couldn't know for sure what the guard near him was thinking at that moment, but he figured it was something along the lines of "...whaaaaat the hell". While the guard momentarily questioned reality, Echo felt for the handle of the weapon depicted on the computer. He grinned at his soon-to-be victory, pulling the handheld gun out, aiming, and squeezing the trigger in one fluid motion.

Click!

...nothing. No fired shots, no felled guards, nothing. Echo looked at his very much alive pursuers, then at his weapon, then back at the guards. As they moved closer to him and the situation grew more hopeless, Echo spared one last look at the image to see its title.

"Uzi-Rifle Movie Prop."

About the Author - Luke Malaczewski is a fifteen-year-old author from Delco, Pennsylvania. When he isn't procrastinating, he enjoys writing novels and going on misadventures with his brothers.

Lightning God by Karthik Nair

I could remember it as if it had just happened. It was a blazing July day in the forest. My family had gone up camping in the woods but I couldn't stand it. The mosquitoes, poison ivy, and even the thin air. Throughout the day I whined and complained until my parents had enough and told me "make the best use of this time and explore, it's not everyday we camp in the mountains." Eager to get away from all of this I annoyingly agree and put my headphones in and set out. I remember walking for who knows how long when I suddenly heard a voice in my head, "who beckons" it groaned in a shockingly deep voice. "I thought I was going crazy or the song had just changed to something random, but then I found a clearing in the forest. As I emerged from it, a great waterfall stood before me. I began admiring the beauty of it because for the first time I had been captivated in this forest. The joy didn't last long for the voice in the head called out again "who dares enter my domain." "My name is Jay Parker, who are you? I just wanted to leave this forest." No voice responded back, instead the sky suddenly turned gray as dark clouds rolled in. Torches along the waterfall were suddenly lit and were leading into it. I was hesitant at first, but then lightning suddenly stuck behind me and out of fear I quickly ran through the waterfall. When I crossed into the waterfall it opened up into a deep cave. Torches were still leading me, but I felt an ominous aura coming from the bottom of it. I hear another strike of lightning outside so I decide to

follow the torches. It was getting warmer as I descended, but I felt the presence of someone watching me. It felt electrifying. When I reached the bottom the last torch had turned off, and it was very dark. I saw a small dim lit area in the center where a pedestal stood, on top lied a vase. I walked closer and inspected the vase, for it had many detailed engravings of two figures coated in lightning and what looked like a raging battle. My curiosity took over and I picked the vase off the pedestal and looked inside. "Jay Parker, you are worthy." In an instant lightning flew out of the vase sparks flying everywhere. I was knocked down by the shock and couldn't process what was happening. The lightning was pouring out of the vase and began to take shape. I couldn't see what it became because right before it fully took shape it came at me and hit me straight in the chest. I remember waking up in front of the waterfall, and confused as to how I escaped the cave. I ran back into the waterfall but hit my head on the rocks right behind it. The cave opening no longer existed. I thought maybe I had gotten hit in the head by something and walked back to camp like nothing ever happened. Little did I know that my life would never be the same again.

Authors Biography:

Karthik is a 15 year old boy who is going into 10th grade at the Downingtown STEM Academy. He loves to go to the gym and play outside with his friends on warm days. On the day where he cannot go outside due to rain, he likes to read his heart out.

It's midnight. The air is thick with the smell of damp firs and dead leaves. A quiet breeze tries to gnaw at the tips of your fingers and nose. You're quite far now, away from your campsite. Away from the others. Earlier you had found yourself unable to sleep, tossing and turning uncomfortably in your tent. Defeated, you decided a late night stroll through the woods might calm your mind. For it had been uneasy since your arrival the previous evening. Brooke Canyon seemed almost too rustic, too tranquil. Like it'd be easy to get caught up in a spell there. However, whenever you brought this up, your friends simply laughed. Waving your concerns aside as they were ready for a fun weekend. Just like right now, you were left on your own.

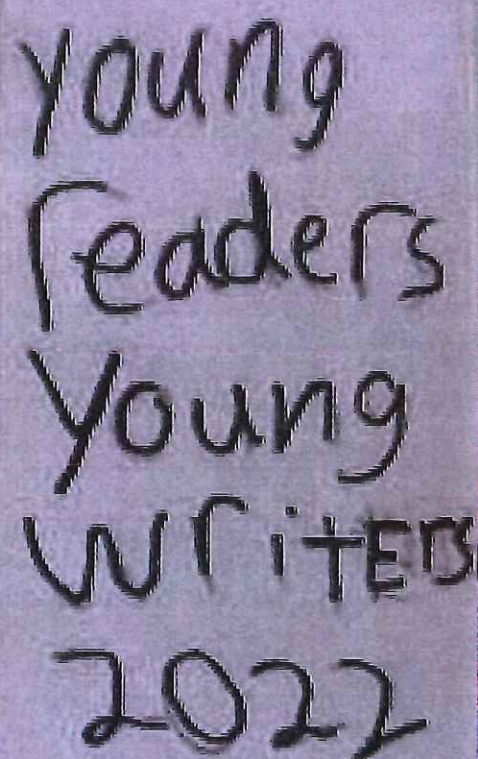
About The Author:

Hazel is sixteen and entering her sophomore year at Downingtown West highschool. She enjoys writing poetry and short stories, as well as photography, hiking, visiting national parks, scouting, and playing softball. Her dream career is to work for National Geographic as a journalist.



About the Author:

Greg Maigur is a history teacher in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. He would like to thank his children for their smiles and encouragement throughout these past two weeks. As always, he is indebted and eternally grateful to his wife for her love and support.



HEHEHEHA

NAME: Henry