



2021
The
PONCE
Review

DIGITAL EDITION

Presented By:
The Ponce Review
Club

PONCE DE LEON MIDDLE
SCHOOL

2021

The Ponce Review

A literary journal by Ponce de Leon Middle School
authors, artists & poets

Principal	Hebert M. Penton
Assistant Principals	Yader Lacayo Christina Alvarez
Activities Director	Diego C. Falcon
Lead Teacher	Marlene Ramos
Teacher Advisor	James Hays
PTSA President	Suzet Cleary
Consultant	Yuneisy Morell
Artwork Advisor	Ana Izquierdo
Art Director	Aryan Shah
Editor	Angelica Lorenzo
Student Readers	Melissa Gonzalez Aryan Shah Elena Rodriguez Kayra Serpenguzel Warren Miller Sofia Martinez Yasmin Abu-Zaraybah
Cover Art	Emiliana Montenegro

To the best of our knowledge, all work presented here is original.

--Ponce de Leon Middle School Administration

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Special Podcast Edition Available Here:

<https://soundcloud.com/paperfreeclass/podcast-episode-401>

Acknowledgements

We have completed another edition of our Ponce Review to showcase the talented voices of our Ponce students. This eighth review could not have been possible without the leadership of our principal, Hebert Penton, who encouraged us and gave us the green light to put together this amazing book. Our Magnet Lead Teacher, Marlene Ramos, again was the silent encouraging voice behind our mission. We would also like to thank our teacher advisor, James Hays, whose hard work and steady hand ensured that no details were missed.

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We would also like to thank the PTSA of this and past years for always assisting and helping to fund this great project – see the full list on page 81. Moreover, we would like to thank Adrian Alvarez, whose expertise gave us our wonderful cover. We would be remiss if we did not mention all of the support provided by Piano Slam for inspiring a love of poetry in our students.

Lastly, we cannot ignore the work of this year's student readers: Angelica Lorenzo, Melissa Gonzalez, Aryan Shah, Elena Rodriguez, Kayra Serpenguzel, Warren Miller, Sofia Martinez, Yasmin Abu-Zaraybah. This year's team was truly an amazing group. They sorted through hundreds of submissions and dedicated time to making this year's book special. Sadly, no donuts were had this year.

Finally, we want to thank all the students who submitted their work. It was overwhelming to see the talent of our middle school students. Every poem, short story, biography, and piece of art reflected their unique and authentic voices. Through their work, we get a glimpse of what makes them happy, sad, anxious, and what it is to be a middle school student. We hope our readers enjoy this year's edition.

Featured Poems

The Future is Dazzling

Andrea Bolz

Do you hear the waves crashing like cymbals?
They pound on the shores of my world: Miami.
Miami, with its dazzling art, history, and music.
The city that fills up to the brim with tourists every summer,
Tourists who we attract like moths to a flame.
My city, Miami, a beautiful, wonderful place,
A place doomed to come to a coda at its crescendo,
Drowning in the warm, rising waters of the world.
But it's not happening just yet, even though it will.
It's 2020 and things are looking bright.
We can enjoy the beauty of our city,
With our tropical climate and picturesque beaches,
Tourists and parties and inspiring musical speeches,
Things are great.
But only until March when news comes of a virus that's spreading,
Coming faster and faster,
Closer and closer,
Until it has arrived in my city with no cure in sight.
We're stuck at home and school is online,
My happy thoughts about 2020 are repositioning,
Because my new normal is saddening,
With masks and distancing.
I can't hug my friends,
My hope is dwindling.
A whole year has passed by,
And nothing has really changed since the beginning.
My expectations are low for the year to come,
Until one fateful day.
I see the headline: a vaccine has come out,
And my hope is bouncing back,
Soaring higher and higher with each word I read,
As I start to imagine our future with this new remedy:
Miami will rise up and regroup,
By overcoming the virus, we can reshape our city,
And become the harmonious ensemble we were before.
The future is dazzling.

Miami Culture

Erick Delvalle

Miami

Culture

The two are related

You will see a Hispanic almost everywhere

Hispanic you say

Well, that's what I am

Cuban music just hits different

When it plays I get in my boogie

I get into that rhythm

That rhythm then turns into movement

I be moving left and right

To the rhythm of the beat

When my sister joins me

We dance in a duet

How can I forget

She's a dancer

She will do the salsa

Likes its nothing

Hit every dance move on beat

Cuban culture is like no other

Part I: Poetry

Our Fight

Kayra Serpenguzel*

Taking the view around me,
Plastic, Pollution, unrecognizable, my Miami?
That plastic you're using, right there,
Is melting, the arctic, degrading our precious layer,
Of security, our white glaciers,
Reflecting off the UV light, we sleep peacefully,
In our chambers,

But that plastic does not only cause this,
Saying, "I won't be the reason we fall off the precipice"
But once everyone starts believing,
That they won't be the reason,
For the never-ending dry season,
For the coral reefs bleaching over,
For NASA begging that new Mars rover,
To discover a solution,
A way to get off of this planet,
The one we ruined, the one that was once dripping with life,
Now, it's just causing us strife,

Looking back on the
Flourishing mammals and plants,
Thriving, from dinosaurs, to tumultuous ants,
Surviving, in peace, never having the chance,
Of fully living through their success,
Because we humans, we thought we were the best,
It's up to us to figure it out,
Not waiting for another wildfire, or imminent drought,

Finding solutions is something we excel at,
But as the saying goes,
“We don’t do it because it is easy, we do it because it is hard”
So, climate change, shouldn’t bombard
Us, because we were its creators,
The once flourishing, thriving, and surviving,
Earth, can be the same,
We can’t live this life, only for future
Generations to blame
Us for the amount of time we had,
The chances at large,

We have the moment,
This is our time to barge
In and take a stand,
Our earth, one planet, one people,
For one undeniable truth, all equal,
To correct the mistakes, to make things right,
Because climate change...
This is our fight.

*Kayra was 2019’s Piano Slam Grand Prize winner! Still making beautiful poems. This poem was featured on Miami-Dade College’s Instagram Page.

The Grand Tree

Nelson Villamar

The Grand Tree is located on Ponce de Leon's field
All the things below it are protected
As the tree itself acts as a shield
Since it is very big, nothing below it is affected
When you see the Grand Tree, you will believe it is not real

The grand tree is like a universe for every small creature
As the students see the tree every year
It attracts new students and every teacher
It is also like a big friendly giant because there is nothing to fear

For some students it is not even there
This is very odd for the woody plant
It can be easily seen, and acknowledged with care
I guess for some students, they just can't
But why though? This behavior is just rare.

Some new students instantly fall in love
While other students in P.E. just played
The Grand tree will smile at you if you look at it above
And will show you love and extra shade
And for some that treat him wrong, the grand tree will forget of
As new students come each year, a friendship can be made.

Youth Violence

Melissa Gonzalez

Waking up everyday
No matter what I say,
I end up hurting inside
And realize this pain is still in sight.

Locked up my feelings with the words you said,
Ended up wishing I was dead.
How much longer can I take?
Constantly trying not to break.

Feeling like I have nowhere to go,
I wouldn't want it to show.
Insecure in my skin,
Is my normal routine.

Please, please make it stop.
Let's not give up.
Let us be daring
And stop bullying.

Things That Make Me Upset

Michael Sanchez

When the house loses power ,

It makes me so much sadder.

When the water is cold in the shower,

It makes me feel so much badder.

Whenever I lose a game,

It makes me feel so lame.

Whenever I fall down ,

I just frown.

Every Time

Amanda Gonzalez

Every time I write,

As I spell these words,

The amusement grows in me,

Drowning in happiness and thoughts,

Content drifts throughout the muscles and organs within me,

Projecting a good mindset and new adventures.

Ocean

Jasley Gonzalez

The ocean stretches for miles around
so many creatures with fins and gills
So many miles below the ground
Sea creatures are dying because of all this pollution,
But thankfully there are people that have come up with a solution

The ocean is important
Especially with all its sea creatures
Its shiny waters sparkling with all its pearls
But not everything is okay down under
Because if you look closely you can see where the pollution plunders

The ocean had so many emotions,
it stayed still, as it tried to figure out what it felt
And the ocean water is as blue as the sky
But the water could be smooth as glass,
Or violent and stormy but this would be the last,

Its waves crashed against the shore
But then it calmed down and it didn't do it anymore
The ocean had mixed emotions
Until they were finally fixed
And so, its other emotions won't be missed

My Companion

Ena Quintana

He is my companion.

He is my protector.

He is my smile.

He is my supporter.

He is my dog.

Thanks for being my friend.

Thanks for protecting me.

Thanks for making me happy.

Thanks for supporting me.

I See You

Oliver Angulo

I see a tree,
But in it
I really see me

You go to new heights
Prosper and see
How really alike
Are you and me
We rise to a challenge
We know we won't get beat
Even if we do
We'll rise back up on our feet
Like an eagle
We must eat
And if we don't
We'll be off our feet

We are stars
So high in the air
That we can see mars

Now that I see you differently
I understand you really

My Cat

Andrea Guevara

Meow,

Meow,

Meow

Is that all you say?

Soft pink nose,

Like a tongue,

Taser green eyes!

OH MY!

Let's play, you say?

Why not sleep all day?

Spent all night on the couch,

With a little mouth

Is that all you do?

Chocolate brown and sandy grey

I really don't

Know what to say

Ocean View

Alana Nunes

I am the peacefulness that stands before you,
The unknown in your eyes,
The calmness that I bring you is trees in the wind, breezing by,
My waves are like silk,
My creatures bring life.

I am the ocean in human eyes,
No one quite knows me,
In my eyes I am the body, providing for thee,
I am like the man no one sees, the mystery,
I am the home for many creatures you see.

I have existed through time,
Bringing fun and joy over the years,
When at night do my calmness best show,
Creatures come to me, when doth moon make bright,
I am home.

I don't have much to explain now,
I do see the people I bring joy,
The home I am for some,
The calmness in my waves, the heart of the sea
The wind blowing through me.

Looking Down

Elias Borjas

Watching down on everyone that passes under it
And planted underground are its feet
Its hands move and shake through the wind
While people stare at it and grin
It can even watch the fish in the sea
Just standing there all the way at up
Staying up day and night to watch the stars shimmer and glow
All its fruits eventually falling non-stop
Because of the wind that will so hard blow
Just think like one and you'll see
It changes color during different seasons
And it's beautiful for many reasons
Its fruits are as red as a rose
And some are grass green
Its body is wood brown
Some live for many years
They have many memories stored within them
That can probably make you shed some tears
And they grow from being just a stem
And it's always happy never down

My Grandma

Angelica Lorenzo

So pure and filled with love,
No matter what I will make her proud,
Even when I fail, she is wowed,
So incredible she is an angel dove

She also has white wings,
In her closet they lay with the rest of her things.
God's perfect creation,
So serene with her actions

Wise with diction and prudence,
Full of wrinkles with wisdom,
I hope to be like her for once
A great woman with cynicism.

Dark and Gloom

Braeden Ramirez

Life is full of dark and gloom.

It has negative and positive things around it.

Everything can happen in life, so I become a boom.

Its full of gloom that there is nothing to do besides sit.

Sitting at the window watching the rain come down on a gloomy day.

Instead of sitting at the widow at the sun.

Having no friends when it's raining besides looking at the bay.

Leaf

Dylan Bibeau

The leaf has veins of an old man
Hanging on the branch of a tree
Its calmness is like sand
Only moving with the breeze
So silent
Floats down like an astronaut on the moon
So silent it goes down
Like a soundless tune
Until it touches the ground
Beautiful like a diamond
Falls onto the back
Of a unexpecting being
It might get scared and swat it off its back
Or not notice the feeling
Quiet like an abandoned island
The breeze is a pilot
Guiding the leaf
Glides below a rainbow
As colorful as a reef
Gracefully flying

Dearest Moon

Sabrina Regalado

Dearest Moon,
My oldest friend.
I've waited for you,
Through nights dark and gloomy.
How are you,
Alone and lonely?

Up in the sky,
With all the stars.
No matter the planet,
We're always quite far.
Yet cherished, you remain,
In my lonely heart.

Calm as a small stream,
Bright like lightning.
Dancing in the night sky,
A ballerina in her prime.

Dearest Moon,
Whether full or new,
You are full of hope
For a start that is new.

Oh, What a Trek!

Christopher Clausing

Off to Beehive Basin we go
Hiking boots ready and water in packs
At the end, a mountain lake we know
Glad the trail bares no snow
We trace and follow other's tracks

Expansive meadows dotted with flowers
An artist's palette unfolds
How we could stay here for hours
As we marvel at the forest trees standing tall like towers
But ahead more majesty beholds

Across rushing streams and creaky foot bridges we walk
As the trail gets most steep
We become unable to talk
Deafened by the cry of a mighty hawk
Lying ahead a smooth flat rock, a perfect place to sleep

Though we stumbled a time or two
The prize was so very near
A pristine oasis now in view
Where sheer cliffs surround us, and the mountain air renew
The cold lake water so crystal clear

As the sun gets lower and a chill arises in the air
A journey down must begin
Though travelers warn of moose and bear
All I feel is the cold wind running through my hair
At last, we reach the warm, cozy inn

Ms. Perception

Kylie Sowers

A one's way to see, hear, feel, understand
Yet, it is the biggest deception
And breaks people apart like a dry twig

She has you a forest of twisted and miserable trees
Or she'll sprout a beautiful blossoming flower
What is one's breeze, is another's disease
Just depends on how you look at it

One might say
"That lady is really nice, she gave me a balloon."
Yet another would say
"A random lady just came and took my balloon."

Perception is reality
You can choose how to understand
But choose wrong and it could mean fatality
Or at least a life that's oddly similar to a rock

Soccer

Jason Dominguez

Soccer is a sport
You must play with strategy
Without skills you cannot play in the court
You must have lungs that last long like battery
Soccer is amusing especially when you play
Soccer is not violent you don't need fists
You need talent not strength
There is nothing more thrilling than the perfect volley
Who hasn't dreamed of the impossible goal

So, I Be

Esteban Cruz

So, I be,
One can say it is a mystery,
Others say it's not
But do they know the plot?
I guess not,
Yet I still try,
To not tell a lie
Otherwise,
I could be fool in a disguise
But it's truly a mystery
So, I be

My Sister

Jared Munoz

My sister is so beautiful and wonderful

Having her as a gift is not refundable

Her hair type is a mix of wavy and curly

Her name is Shirley

Her favorite color is red

And she is like my best friend

She has an olive skin tone

And she is always on her phone

She is gorgeous

And she is my best fortune

She has nice colored braces

She likes to go to many fast-food places

She has a lot of sass

But also a lot of class

Her favorite candy bar is Twix

But don't play with her because she has a lot of tricks

The Ocean

Gabriel Otano

The ocean:

A massive blue void

Covered with colors and life

Whales and sting rays 'fly' through the sea like planes in the sky

Fish interact with each other in coral reefs like neighbors in a neighborhood.

And sharks patrol the oceans, looking for their next prey.

Yet the ocean inspires horror.

It is a place that is home to many horrifying predators.

A place that is unexplored and holds terrifying secrets

A place that has existed since the very beginning of the Earth,

and yet not much is known about it.

This place is the ocean.

The Tranquility Within a Sound

Jaden Fabien

A sound is an everlasting hum.

The tranquility produced by the single beat of a drum.

Sound has no limits it can be the screaming of a child in duress.

The singing of a mother singing the child to its rest.

Music, like a memory is joyful but at times can bring pain.

Music is the sweet embrace of the wind.

Sound and only sound can only be contained by the muff of an ear.

Music grows and changes forever growing and empowered.

The vibration of a single string can hold the story of a hero and a coward.

However dreadful the silence is, music will persevere.

Music can do what a poet hopes to in a single beat.

A sound will never end but can be forgotten.

The screaming of a man can be made into the beating of a drum.

Joggers can run miles under the emphasize of a single sound.

Sound has no bound.

Tens of sounds can be shaped within your mind.

Music has no bind.

Even able to erase the pain behind a crime.

So powerful even the most defiant most abide.

Music has no limit and is never finished.

Fruit

Sol Fernandez

Fruit, so glorious to paint
And so amazing to see.
It's so very juicy
for me to eat.

Fruit, in different forms you came
in various colors you grow
Red, orange, yellow, making
a bright, vivid rainbow

Fruit, in so many examples
Apples, bananas, mangos
So many exotic ways you thrive
Elemental to survive

Fruit, a healthy choice of food
It could change your mood
So many ways to eat
That will make your day so sweet

Covid

Antonio Deandrade

I'm here

Stuck in a box

With all the people in my community.

The only way to get out is with help from all of you.

There is something different about this box.

It is infected with a toxic virus,

That spreads to whoever is within arm's reach.

We need to be cautious.

I am waiting for a possible way out.

I am waiting for the vaccine that may help us all

Like a hibernating bear, I am in an endless sleep.

All my normal habits have changed.

People have become lazier.

Until this vaccine comes, I need to be patient.

I need to protect myself and others,

By wearing masks, and social distancing.

We should take other countries as role models.

Countries like New Zealand who have ridded Covid form their country.

We are the tail of the snake; we are the last in line.

I will wait, we will wait,

Together we can make it through Covid

Although we will be last,

We would still have done it.

Good Adventures

Sheila Mateu

Good adventures with my dad
He was like the key to my future
Or that he made me happy with his good humor
But now his not in my life
It's like I was hit by a sword
Now in these days I recover
So, he is always going to be in my heart
Trying new things and making new friends, this is just the start.

Nature

Eli Abreu

Nature is nice
But can fight
It helps the sun shine bright

It grows trees to all sorts of heights
And grows plants of all types

When you have a bad day
Nature is there

To provide you with fresh air
It gives you a renewed sense

Of Peace

Sunflower

Paola Padilla

Sister of mine, whom I admire
Unlike the stereotype, you are kind
No one could ever replace you
Forever will I have your back
Like a sunflower, so bright
Our bond is unmatched
Wherever we are we are our laughter heard miles away
Endless memories are made
Remember those times once we've aged

Roses

Alexander Portillo

Beautiful petals you have with the color of red.
Blooming in the sun like a star in the night sky.
Pointy thorns in your stem like if you were the king of all flowers.
Leaves around you, protecting your beauty that makes you.
The beauty for anything if it were a house, restaurant, even a store.
The rose is what shows the beauty red flowers can have.

Tom and Jerry (The Dogs)

Daniel Arrechevala

One is bald
One is hairy
One is Tom
And the other is Jerry
Jerry is small
Opposite with Tom
Tom is fat
but
Jerry chases rats
Jerry is skinny
But
Tom loves Jimmy (My Dad)
They are brothers
Who love each other

The City of the Sea

Isabella Padilla-Tozzi

The glorious city in the sea
The sea is blue and the streets are narrow
The smell of salt from the sea is refreshing
The floating city is beautiful
But it's pitiful
To soon leaves sorrowing
It will come to an end
I befriended this sea
Soon I'll wake and have a tea
"It was just a dream"

To Fly

Jasmin Abu-Zaraybah

Wondering how it would feel to fly as I look up at the sky

Looking up I saw a bird flying by

That's no ordinary bird as what I see is a hawk

This hawk is talking, I can hear him as clear as day

The hawk comes down, sitting beside me as I lay

He talks, so he must be human

He has a family, so he must be human

He has a life story, so he must be human

This hawk doesn't seem to be a hawk but in fact a human

Or are humans like hawks, we have yet to discover

Hawks have the ability of flight

They also have the ability of amazing sight

The views of the world that a hawk can see

The perspective of how he views life is so different then how I see

From the limitations to its surroundings a hawk is truly free

We are each different in our own way

Unique is more of what I should say

A hawk is free and can see the world in all its angles

From every perspective there is to see

I want to be as free as a hawk can be

Love and Tears are Gifts from Mother

Ana Betancourt

We are all husks,
Made from the same tree,
Woven from the shred and tear of the life before our time,
Our lives are nothing more than the creation,
Made from another.

The mother that made the trees we need to live,
Waved to ones who came before are time goodbye,
She smiled as her hair guided them towards the light,
We yearn to hear her voice,
But she only speaks when our last moment creeps nearby.

Mother speaks once in our lives,
Her voice is like a siren's song,
Waiting for us to crash our ship,
Into a glacier oozing of bloodlust for our deaths,
We die with no regrets.

Closing our eyes,
We hear the mother's song drowning our soul,
Into a furry hole,
Falling deeper into our darkest despairs,
Seeing our lives flashing before our eyes.

Grass made from silver threads,
Critters made from gold,
Had freedom like bird's wings,
Song from all over sound like dolphin's cry,

We landed in a god's playground.

Mother slept by the tree that glowed with life,
We started and walked towards the light,
Like moths drawn to a flame,
We fell deeper into the sire's lair,
As we took our final breath.

We behold the beauty,
Of our tree of life,
Each leaf that had fallen,
Was another's end of the road,
We freeze before taking another step.

We see as our lives fall from the lowest branch,
As it comes towards us,
We shed tears of black gold,
The lives we protect since birth,
Were now falling to the ground.

To be reborn once more,
As the ground shook below our feet,
The ground ripped and we all prayed for the best,
But we did not fall,
We floated in the air.

As we looked towards the tree,
A hole ripped above our heads,
Then our mother who dragged us below the earth spoke,
'No matter where you go',
'You are never truly alone.'

The words we heard smoothed our hearts,
All the tears we shed,
Seemed like a forgotten memory from our past,
As we rose upwards towards the light,
She waved once more as her hair guided us towards the light.

The Magic of a Book

Andrea Bolz

As I open my eyes and flip open the glossy cover,
The words call to me.
Begging to be embraced
Followed
Read
As I journey on, the demigods and dragons fight right there while I watch.
The rebels cackle in the shadows.
The elves and gnomes rebuild a city of jewels.
As I worry and cheer and cry for them,
The story continues on,
Transporting me away from my own worries and letting me discover.
Oh, the magic of the page.
Right there on the shelf,
Waiting to be opened
Followed
Read
After the story is over, my worries come bouncing back until...
I open my eyes and flip open a new glossy cover as the words call to me.

Phases

Valentina Barrero

The rose in my garden was born,
Delicate like an infant,
Fresh like a sunrise,
In the Spring of March.
You make me fall in love with your color,
With your fragrance,
Strong as a youth,
In the Summer of August,
With the cold your petals fall,
And your color turns golden
Like a mature and wise man,
In the Autumn of October.
Already withered,
Like a wrinkled elder,
The bitter ice turned off your glow,
In the Winter of January.

Dogs

Andres Hernandez

Dogs are our best friends
Dogs need us like we need dogs
If you don't have a friend, dogs are there
Don't have any one to play with play with your dog
Don't have any one to hang out with hang out with your dog
Your dog is your best friend, so will never hurt you
Because it is the only true friend

Poem

Jada Rose

We met I feel for you
You brought me sunshine
When I only saw rain and not the sun
You brought me laughter
When I only felt pain and bored

How that work
I love you like mountain snow
So fresh, so fallen
But the pain waits for breaking
How that work

I don't pay attention to the
World ending.
It has ended for me
Many times
And began again in the morning.

And now you
Have me thinking
If everything temporary
Feels permanent
For a reason?

Ponce Middle

Isabel Morales

Ponce de Leon,
A school of possibilities and wonders.
A place where I explore,
Learn, see, and feel
The wonders of school,
Where I become a better and smarter person.

The Car that Follows

Brian Gomez

I tried to run away from the car
But I didn't get very far
I was scared to know what was going to happen
To my surprise it wasn't a stranger
It was my father telling me goodbye

Hawks

Jorton Cabrera

The big shadow I see on the floor.

What can it be - a big plane in the sky?

Therefore, I look up - it looks like a kite, a shadow on my eyes.

It yells a "Big Mean Call" so loud that all its prey hid in a dark room.

When it hunts, I see its big claws go out and gets its prey.

Goes to its nest and another fly shadow comes that I see on the floor.

Then the big shadow goes to the nest to feed the shadow baby.

Then when the shadow starts flying it goes to a big waterfall and down to get its fishing prey and grabs it

The fish flies.

It drags it in the water and the shadow goes back.

When it is dark, they hunt little mice - you can't see the shadows they are my hidden hunters.

Their eyes go green, dark, white, grey, and darker green and therefore it is like it has night vision.

They're scarier in the dark - it makes you feel hollow and afraid, and the prey is made to run.

The shadow is the fastest, fiercest hunter.

The Untied Shoelace

Ariel Borges

It was a Monday, and I was getting some lunch
Everything was perfect until I noticed my shoelace was untied
I was mad and grabbed my brunch
It was the opposite of a joyride
My friend noticed and told me to tie them
I didn't know how so he told the lady guard
He is so dumb
When she came, I was scarred
She told me to come with her, so I obeyed
I started to question my friendship with my friend
For my reputation it was a downgrade
I got in trouble and I got backstabbed by my friend in the end
My shoelace was untied
It ended without a bright side

Poem for the Animals

Donmondre Williams

Zoos - a place where animals are being held captive
I'm not saying it's unadapted,
But why be locked behind bars
When you can look at the stars?

Animals are good for breeding and research
And we all learn from our teachers
All animals want is to be free
Just like you and me

Night-time

Emily Garcia

Night-time is so beautiful.

The moon comes out to light the night-sky

While you feel the small breeze pass by,

While you can hear and see owls singing

And some fireflies.

You can see the lake nearby shimmering

With the light of the moon,

While you see a shooting star passing by and then you make a wish.

Night-time is so beautiful, isn't it?

Nature's Day

Maximus Antrez

As the sun rises, the trees dance in the wind.

The flowers show their colors.

What is it that you will find?

You can see deer going to a pond with their mother.

To truly find yourself there you need to free your mind.

Even the smallest of animals are still there.

Including bacteria and viruses.

They can even be in the air.

Viruses can make you sick and even weaken your muscles.

Don't worry if you are there because it is kind of rare.

There is also grass that plays with the wind.

They dance as well as two people dancing.

Just think about that moose on top advancing to new lands.

And still searching and searching.

Until he finds a safe space and that is now his land.

Now there are more and more animals waking up.

As the sun winks at them.

Now they are in search of food just hope that they have eyes of an eagle.

Now it's not as easy as getting a bagel.

Just see nature as a symbol of the animals saying that they are there.

Flowers

Patricia Rivera

Violets, a nice purple light
So pretty, oh what a delight!
Daisies, petals white as snow
In fast draining soil they best grow
Petunias, pretty and oh so pink
So pretty they make you think.

Tulips, red as cherries
They even smell better than berries
Sunflowers, petals yellow as the sun
So appealing they cannot be undone
Roses, as many colors as the rainbow
So pleasing
Why? I don't know

Perfect

Sofia Martinez

Perfect
I love my coffee strong
And you don't like it at all
I have Mac and cheese for dinner
when you're already, fast asleep
You love daytime
While I live for night-time
We're perfect for each other

Keep Your Spirits High

Sebastian Reyes

Anything can happen in this time and day
For you see many things have something to say
For example, take this pandemic - it came out of nowhere
But here we are, where happiness is everywhere
Just look for family, friends, or just great pets,
Or go play video games, possibilities are endless,
In these times of this disease,
Some of us are not easy to please,
Sometimes it's just gray skies,
But sometimes sunshine takes a rise,
Keep yourself distracted and find a hobby,
You can read Harry Potter and find out about elfin Dobby,
For what I'm trying to say,
Is keep anger at bay,
Keep your spirits high,
And happiness will fly,
Remember Dreams will come true
And everything will be happy like you.

Humanity: The Ride of Life

Aryan Shah

Humanity...

Humanity is a ride

It's a ride made of love and emotions

Forged by care

This ride, it's not optional

Everyone goes through it

Everyone passes through its different stages no matter what they think

It's a ride where once you begin you have to end

You may see others in this ride

Others that care

And you must too

You have to care and love

It's what being human means

You have to have feelings...

If you don't... you are not being human

At first, when you start

You will see your parents

Then you'll see other people

Other people who might care

If they don't, teach them to

I heard once,

That part of being human means to give more to the world than you want out of it

And the other part of humanity

The other part of the ride

Is love...

It's compassion

It's caring for everyone and everything

It's respecting others

Once you learn to respect others

You will get the biggest prize of them all...

Which is love, compassion and sympathy towards yourself.

Once you get that

Teach others...

Teach others to do what you did

And to receive the gift you did

The thing that helps you in this journey, this ride

Is literature

Literature is in a way the "seatbelt" for you during this ride

It teaches you

It teaches you to be human and helps you receive the prize of love faster

And once you finish...

You fade away... with all you've done

All you've achieved

And lastly the gift of love and compassion

Part II: Featured Artists

Mountain Lake

Yaretzi Acevedo



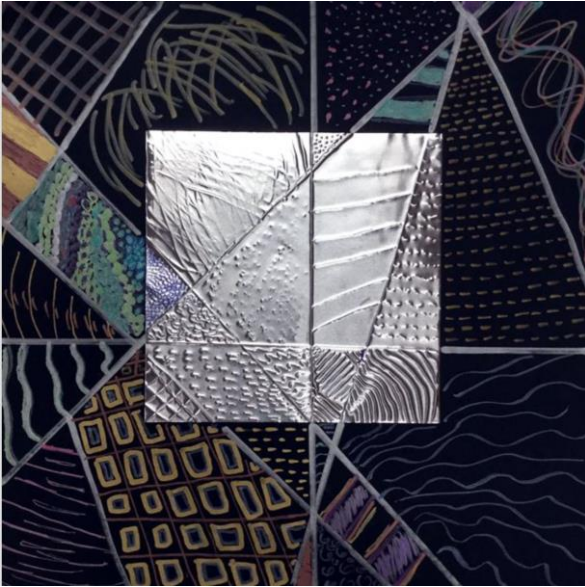
Midnight Mist

Elena Rodriguez



Fools

Layla Jaime



The Secret Light Inside a Dog

Ashley Galindo



Bananas

Allen Pedraja



Twilight

Natasha Landero



Suffering

Nelly Valdes



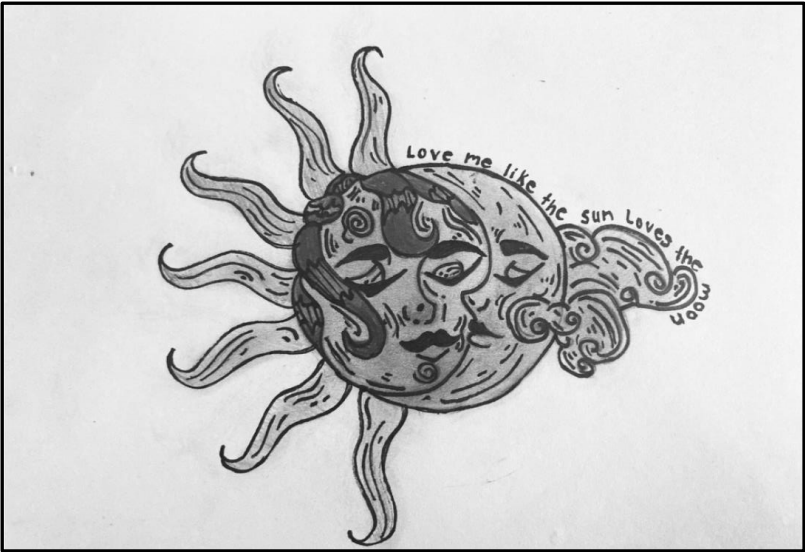
Miami

Hannah Cromer



Love

Brendha Ballester



Falling Snow

Camila Delgado-Arauz



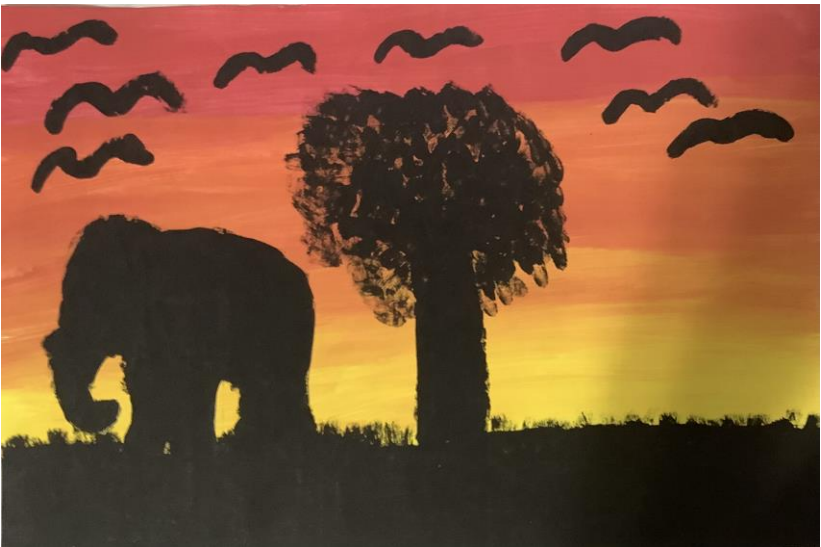
Desert Sky

Dhayana Salas-Salas



Elephants

Antonella Martin



Part III: Stories

The Lucky Chance

Nicole Sotelo

“Ding-a ling, Ding- a ling, Ding-a ling” sounded the bell as it went off as Aphrodite darted inside her grandparent’s restaurant holding a sharp grip on the flier she had found on the sidewalk. The customers went silent, and their eyes were big as saucers as they saw the arrival of Aphrodite as if they had seen tiger enter the room. Aphrodite felt the customers gaze on her and continued to dart to the kitchen were her grandparents and the others were. Aphrodite couldn’t wait to enter the room and tell her grandparents and the others about the news on the flier. Aphrodite burst into the room and heard her grandma scream, “Aaaaaah!” shocked from the sudden appearance from Aphrodite. Her Grandpa was cooking what they called gallopinto, rice and beans. “Grandma, Grandpa look this food organization is offering spices, appliances, and a reward of \$10,000 if we enter the competition and win!”, she yelled pointing aggressively to the flier. Her grandfather replied, “Aphrodite please calm down. Now let me see that flier of yours, girl.” Abuelito stopped making the rice and beans. She handed her Grandfather, or who she called her Abuelito, the flyer. Her grandma went back to cutting the onions as she was hearing what Abuelito was saying. Aphrodite’s grandma was known as “La cortadora” or the cutter for her sharp cutting techniques. Abuelito declared as he read the flier with his strong and firm voice, “Enter the food competition in order to win spices, appliances and a reward of \$10,000. As well as earning the name of “Best Restaurant” in the city. In order to win, make a unique dish, write what makes your restaurant distinct to the others, and complete a form. Must be older than 13 to enter. Once this is done, go to the mall to submit the form, dish, and paragraphs.”

Grandpa handed back the flier back to Aphrodite, and stared at Aphrodite with his sharp narrow blue eyes. Abuelito explained, “Aphrodite, princess, I really doubt we will even have the chance to even go to finals. The chances of winning are so low. I know you were so excited to enter the since last year, but I really doubt we will have the chance to win.” Aphrodite was so disappointed with how her grandfather responded. She had expected responses like “Great Idea”, “This is your year”, or something else. She glanced to her grandma to see she if she would have gotten any support or anything, but her grandma just continued slicing the onions without saying a word. Aphrodite said, “Grandma say something please. You know I’ve wanted to do this for months. Representing our restaurant is such a great honor.” Something sparked in Grandma that led her to comment, “Darling, let the girl enter the contestant.” Abuelita glanced at Grandpa with her gorgeous circular eyes pleading him to allow me to enter. Grandpa replied hesitantly, “Okay, you can participate. Although, I can’t guarantee the chances of you winning.” Aphrodite was so enthusiastic with the change of manner. Aphrodite sprinted to her Grandparents and kissed them on the cheeks. She told them, “I’m going home

to work on the competition. See you later.” Aphrodite bolted out of the restaurant and went home.

Aphrodite entered her apartment room. She saw her mother, two brothers, and little sister she waved at them and went straight to her room. Once in her room, she sat in her moving chair and wrote about what made the restaurant so special. She smiled as she wrote about her grandparents and their friendliness towards their customers, how the customer made the restaurant so special, and so on. Aphrodite finished the paragraphs; she was now thinking about what dish to make. After an hour, she still didn’t know what to make. Aphrodite was getting so stressed out. She started grabbing her beautiful black hair harshly. “Ugh, what can I make?”, she uttered. Aphrodite wanted to make something special, something that represented her restaurant and its tradition. That’s when it clicked to her. Aphrodite was going to make Ceviche de Camaron with gallopinto, or fresh raw fish with rice and beans. She left her room and scrambled to the kitchen. She yelled to her mother who was watching television, “Mom, where are the shrimps?” Her mother replied “In the freezer to the right of the ice-cream.” Aphrodite started prepping everything. She started cooking the shrimp, the rice, and the beans. After two hours, she was finished. The aroma of the dish was incredible. Aphrodite’s mother came to the kitchen and said, “Can I have a taste?” Aphrodite snapped, “No, it’s for the competition mother!” The door opened and she heard someone’s steps. They were her grandparents. They greeted Aphrodite’s mother. She told her grandparents, “Can you please sign these papers for the contest?” They replied, “Yes.” She handed them the papers and a pen. They signed the forms. Aphrodite asked, “Abuela y Abuelo, can you take me to the mall to hand my dish, paragraph, and the form? They replied, “Yes, we can take you there.” Aphrodite took the dish to her Grandparent’s car, her grandmother to the page with two paragraphs, and her grandfather took the form. When they arrived at the mall, there was a line of people. Aphrodite waited in line until it was her turn to submit the dish, form, and paragraphs. It was Aphrodite’s turn. She turned in everything. The judges were testing out her dish and were writing on a piece of paper. They made no expression at or no indications of emotion. Her grandparents were waiting at a table nearby. Her grandfather was tapping his foot impatiently. The judges told Aphrodite, “The dish is great. Please go ahead and wait near the tables. We will be announcing the winners soon.” Aphrodite nodded and went to sit near her grandparents. Time was ticking. Her grandfather was trying to motivate her by giving her advice and compliments. The judges stood up and went to the podium. They turned the microphone and announced, “We will be announcing the winners.” All eyes went directly to them. The audience waited impatiently. The judges announced, “The third-place winner is Zeus Langer. He will be receiving a blender and cooking pans”. Zeus Langer wen to the stadium and received the packages and left back to his parents. The judges announced, “The second-place winner is Athena Loen” Athena stood up and went to the stadium and received her reward what seemed like a ticket of \$5,000. The judges were

about to announce the 1st place winner. The suspense was high in the room. Aphrodite was nervous and had the strong urge of crying. The judges announced, "The 1st place winner is.... Aphrodite Light." Aphrodite was shocked had she really gone this far. She was crying of excitement and her legs were shacking. She hugged her grandparents and ran to the stadium. She shook the hand of all four judges. She had received a paper stating the day she would be able to receive the reward. Aphrodite later on, went back to her grandparents and went home. On the ride of the car, her grandfather said, "I'm sorry for ever doubting you." Aphrodite replied, "It's okay. I doubted myself too." In the end, they lived happily ever after.

Life with Covid-19

Emmanuel Stone

Life with COVID-19 is understandably frustrating. Let's see from the list of things here; oh right. Stress, anxiety, despair, fear, hate; all those I think teenagers have felt during this, disastrous 2020. Let's talk about, hmmm, the beginning, when you only heard about 300 cases, from jokingly saying "oh haha maybe you might have it" being turned into a serious "please stay away from me", it's terrifying how much this microscopic virus has caused. One breath and your life could be over, the same way many other lives have been ended. This virus is neither a joke, nor some stupid thing the government created as some believe it to be, this is REAL. People don't like the conditions they're in so they rebel, but what for? What can you possibly gain from preventing yourself to stay safe, preventing your family to be safe, what you gain from practically putting people's lives at risk? This pandemic is no one's fault, if you want to kill yourself fighting something that isn't there go ahead, but this is an issue you're only making worse. As many serious issues, problems derive from there. Now everyone has been affected, one way or another, who would say for the better? WHO? Not being able to go to school, not being able to travel and see family, not being able to relax. It's horrible. Disgusting. We don't deserve to be in this situation. Yet here we are, suffering every day. It may not seem like much but in total, but this is the worst thing that could happen in any year, affecting everyone, children, adults, babies, elders. It's just terrible what we're going through. Once this is gone or doesn't become a problem for everyone anymore... Then comes the chance to be truly happy once again. Then comes the chance of talking and meeting and doing things you love once again. Then comes the chance to be FREE. There is no good way to end this rant, but I wish you all a good luck through this nightmare of a time. Stay safe please.

A Scary Situation

Alejandra Acosta

It's a normal day in school the teachers are giving an excessive amount of homework that you know you're not going to do but, you don't say anything, so you don't have to hear the teacher talk anymore. All of the sudden you hear the teacher say, "Everyone under the desk now!" You are questioning why but stay quiet. You hear screams but you pass out because you have ligyrophobia, which is the fear of loud noises. You start to dream about how life could've been if your dad didn't pass away which is why you have been failing. When dreaming you zone out which leads to you to fall into a coma. When you wake up you find yourself lost and start to cry because your dream wasn't true. Slowly you start to realize that you need to find importance in your life, and start paying attention, and get good grades, and get accepted into a good college. At the end, you pass away with your husband with a smile on your face knowing it was all worth it.

Taking on Life as a Girl

Alejandra Cabrera

I like being a girl, however, sometimes I wish I was not. Especially when I get called soft, or when I get called voiceless, or when I try to be a leader, but I can't because I'm a girl, or when I learned that women don't get fair pay, or when I hear that women used to be the property of men, or when I overhear a whisper down the hallway about my looks, or when I see that girls and boys are not handled with the same amount of respect.

Now don't get me wrong, I don't want to be a boy; I just wish that being a girl did not represent who I am or would like to be. But I am glad to be a girl, especially when I see that we fought to be equal with men, when we went out in the streets to be able to vote and when I see a woman as a leader because it has not always been this way. But at least I've started to see a larger change in the world, where color does not define you, or your gender or sexuality, because this world is developing, where suddenly I don't like being a girl...

I love being a girl.

My Ponce Experience

Natalia Chavez

My name is Natalia Chavez, and I am a Ponce de Leon student. I am also an explorer at this school and so are the rest of the students attending here. I am an 8th grader and been here since the 6th grade. Ponce de Leon is a good school to learn at, but some people may not see it as a good school because of the way students act. Student behaviors affect this school because some students decide not to learn and misbehave but other students do come to school to learn which is what makes our school look and seem good.

When I was in 6th grade, that school year was okay because it was good because of how well I did and how I learned and paid attention to my teachers. It was also bad because in school people often have lots of friends, but I didn't. I had a couple like 2/3 but most of the time by myself because I wouldn't have lunch with them, and we would be in class not being able to talk. Basically, the school year was good, but I was an isolated person and didn't have many friends. I still don't but throughout the middle school years I learned that I don't need friends.

In my 7th grade year, I did many things I shouldn't have. I did start having more friends and most were a good influence and only like a couple weren't. My grades in sixth grade were good but in seventh grade they were average but not as good as in 6th grade. I started distracting myself from doing all my work to only doing some that I thought were important. Then I did something bad that had caused me to get scsi. I had a friend who was going to do something very bad and she included me in it, and I didn't do anything about it but went along with her and got in trouble with her. The only reason I had got in trouble is because she ratted me out but it's also my fault for being included in it and not backing out. This year had taught me that you don't really need friends because some are trustworthy, and some distract you.

In 8th grade which is this year I haven't really been doing my best because I've been procrastinating a lot lately. I had a couple of C's but plan in doing better and getting them to at least a b. This year I have been trying to get good grades recently because I saw that I didn't start good in getting good grades. I also don't have many friends, but I have some friend which help me in doing better because they let me do my work and tell me to do it so I wouldn't fail. But so far this year has been kind of weird because of the pandemic going on but it's still not stopping us from being Ponce Explorers and still learning.

The Wrong Path

Kevin Santillan

5 Months ago, we went camping in Tennessee. We were climbing for 3 hours and a half. When we got there, we saw nothing. It was just trees and mountain. We had to go all the way back just to realize we went the wrong way, which wasn't even a path in the first place.

We had to hike for another 2 hours. While we were hiking, we saw a bear, but it was a brown bear, so it didn't attack us. We were lucky, but we were so scared. And it was already nighttime by the time we got there. We didn't even have time to make a tent. We just put a pillow on a rock and slept. The next day, we had trouble finding the way back since it was really foggy, and we were high up. We struggled and my brother scraped his knee. He had to hike on one leg, but he was able to walk after 10 minutes. We got to the car and all of us were probably thinking, "We are never going back there again."

Wake Up!

Pedro Rivas

"EHH!! EHH! EHH!" As he hears his alarm go off again after hitting the snooze button multiple times and he thinks to himself, "Maybe just 5 more minutes?"

5 minutes later: "EHH! EHH! EHH!" This time he checks his phone, "Oh no. I'm already late for school. I've got finals today! This is bad." He gets dressed up for school as fast as he can and leaves on his bike. He gets there 30 minutes late. Not only that, but he also forgot to eat so now he was stuck in a classroom in his math final hungry and stressed already from the rough morning. He decides he needs to go to the bathroom to refresh his mind.

"Ms. Brown, may I go to the bathroom?"

Ms. Brown replies "Yes, but hurry, you don't have too much time to spend."

He goes to bathroom and splashes some cold water on his face to wake him up. He feels better and not as stressed but still hungry. He did study for his math final, but he stayed up to late causing him to be overly tired and not wake up. But as soon as he started answering a couple questions, he was able to be more comfortable but just as he was answering the 20th question out of 27 the bell rang. He was nervous but he was allowed to go finish with the rest of the kids who applied for extra time. He was anxious to receive his test score, though, because if he got lower than a b, he would be in big trouble by his parents - they had a tendency of being more old-style with their punishments.

A couple days later after numerous times of checking the gradebook: Refresh, refresh, refresh, "Yes! I got a B!"

A Christmas Hero

Diego Mora

Once upon a time, there was a boy named Timmy Wattson who loved the holidays. He lived in New York, so the winter there was extra fun. The snow was 8 inches thick, and the snowball fights were INTENSE. Timmy loved so much writing letters to Santa, in fact, when he wrote a letter to Santa every year, he would ask how the reindeer and the elves were.

One year, when he was nine years old, Santa finally wrote back! The envelope had the usual piece of parchment and a very strange glow, and when Timmy unfolded the parchment, it came to life! It folded into an origami Santa Claus; it was fat, the size of Timmy's hand. The little Santa said that it had a very urgent message for Timmy that he must read carefully. The little Santa said the following:

“Dear Timmy,

You have been a very good boy this year and I know that you are to become an excellent engineer, and that is why I need your help in the North Pole, quick! Our toy and candy making machines are broken and I can't seem to fix them, even with my magic! (You would think of me as an expert in fixing machines but I'm more of a magic guy) We need to save Christmas!

Help,
Santa Claus

P.S.
To enter this place
The pieces you must replace
And then you must repair
To get to my lair”

He couldn't believe it! Santa had asked him for help! But those last few sentences confused Timmy, as he wasn't very good with riddles.

He read it again, “To enter this place, The pieces you must replace, And then you must repair, To get to my lair.”

“Hmmm,” he wondered, staring blankly into the poster of his favorite actor, Ryan Sluchenberg. But that did not matter to him now. He was going to be Santa's little helper! But how would he get from New York all the way to the North Pole in less than a month? He couldn't buy his own plane ticket, he couldn't fly on a broomstick, and he didn't have superpowers. And then, when he went outside, he found a gigantic sleigh in his driveway! He was wondering how he would control it when he saw a big red lump on the back. It was Santa! Timmy contemplated him for a second and hopped on, knowing that his parents were out for exactly two days, and the two flew off to the chilly North Pole.

Like a flash of light, they landed smoothly on the snow but Timmy was confused about why they were there, so he asked Santa why they were there and he explained that he had to prove that he was worthy of entering Santa's village so he followed Santa to an old shed in which they found an old fuel power sled that he had to fix and ride all the way to Santa's Village but he had to be careful for there was always a giant cat on the hunt in the forest and that it will surely hear Timmy so he had to go as fast as possible in order to not be eaten by the giant cat. Timmy spent about an hour and a half trying to fix the motor sled and he accomplished it. He added the fuel and went off at full speed towards the Village. He did not get lost because Santa had made a green path in the sky to guide him. Once he finally arrived, he caught his breath and got off almost paralyzed from the speed.

Timmy was amazed by the lights and little men running around, for he had only seen them in books and movies. When Timmy went to look at the workshops, he found that indeed none of the machines was working but he needed to get some rest before checking on the workshops.

The next day, he woke up early and had already made his own breakfast – because he knew how to cook-. After breakfast, Timmy went for a walk around the village and when he got to the enormous Christmas tree in the middle of the village, he found Santa looking up at the star on the top of the tree that he somehow had not noticed before, even though it was the brightest thing in the whole North Pole. When Timmy said hello to Santa, Santa was surprised to see him up so early considering how late he always woke up. Timmy said that he wanted to be awake as earliest possible to work on all the machines. Santa walked him to the main candy workshop and Timmy found that everything wasn't as hard to fix as he initially thought, next machine was the Mini movie theater that Santa had built for entertainment. In this case, Timmy just needed to fix the camera and rebuild the wall on which the movie was projected. The village was very large; therefore, Timmy still had a long way to go but at the end of the day he had almost finished fixing all of the technology on the Village but still missing the Post Office which had an intricate system of air currents which carried letters from mailboxes all around the world to the Village's post office, what a challenge!

First, he needed to rebuild the air tunnels, and then he made the wind stronger so letters could get to the office in less than 15 seconds and finally painted the office walls, so it looked a little newer. Timmy had finished his special job so quickly that Santa gave him a very special gift that he would never forget: a Santa Suit and a snow globe with a figure of him and Santa Claus like pro builders.

Right after saving Christmas, Timmy went back home just in time to greet his parents and enjoy the magic of the holidays.

The Dark Days

Jayden Chamorro

It's a nice sunny day the sun is shining, it feels good to be alive but then the power goes out and fear spreads as it becomes night. They become scared and cold as night arrives as they have no heaters especially because it was mid-December. They couldn't huddle up in groups due to a widespread pandemic, there was chaos. As people raided important buildings and supermarkets for food supplies and self-defense weapons, they used whatever power they have and conserve it to only use when necessary. A report suggest most American's only have 34 days' worth of power in their generators, 2 months into the crisis. All backup generators fail, and no one has power so people are left to generate power, some people use old bikes and loosen up the rollers on treadmills to generate power as of now the only power source left is windmills. They are only given to the upper class that have lots of supplies while others are stuck in the freezing cold to suffer. The entire government was shut down and the world was chaos with people attacking other people and no chance of surviving. Certain people formed alliances and helped each other while others weren't so friendly to say the least.

My First Dog

Sukira Sosa

When I was a little girl, it was around Halloween time many years ago, I was surprised with a tiny puppy named Girl, and I was so happy to have a new puppy! We had to treat her like a baby, but not for too long because she slowly started getting bigger and bigger every day. Now, it's a few years later, and she is now 8 years old in dog years or 51 years old in human year. She is an 8-year-old terrier who loves to play and knows how to protect our family. If she hears a scary/loud noise she will start to bark loudly to alarm us that there is something wrong and to go inside and to get away from danger or anything that can try and harm us. To conclude this short story and she lives happily and joyful, and energetic with me and my family.

Is She Missing?

Miranda Pacheco

I walk into school and I see that my best friend, Mya is absent. I thought it was weird because she is never absent to school. A few days later, she still isn't showing up to school, so I decide to call her. She never answers my calls, and her parents act suspicious every time I ask them if she is there with them. I tell my parents about it. They are shocked! They look to each other's faces and put on a nervous, concerned look. I am so worried about my parents' faces and how my best friend disappeared out of nowhere. A few weeks go by, and I decide to bravely ask Mya's parents where she is. They say that Mya is still sick. I can't hold it anymore, so I repeat my question in a firm voice. They just keep telling lies, until I decide to just call the police. The police interrogated them. Turns out they are not suspicious at all. They are also worried about where she is. I panic. I asked myself, "Where could my best friend go?" During the interrogation, I hear that her mom says that my parents are suspicious and that they will not answer their calls and that they do not have contact with her parents. I cannot believe it! My parents? How could they be suspicious? Later when the interrogation is finished, the police go to my house where my parents are. Once they get there, they knock and knock, and my parents will not answer the door. They finally answer the door, and the police come in and interrogate them as well. It turns out my parents kidnapped my best friend! How could they do this to me, her, and her family? I am so upset. My friend was in our basement this whole time! My parents explain that she has a lot of talent and that they wanted to kidnap her so that her talents would make us rich and famous. The police say that my parents are criminals and that they have been searching for them for a long time. I can't believe this. Now, my best friend is out of my basement and is here with me! Her parents ask for custody of me and now she is my sister. Now, the bad people are where they are supposed to be. I will live my best life!

The Secret Light Inside a Dog

Ashley Galindo
(Illustration pg. 51)

“8 Lives”

While I was waking up, I thought if I should wake up Mom, Dad, and Alissa, but I was too tired, so I went back to sleep and then woke up again thanks to Rudolph. He was just adopted last week and thinks he own the house that silly old cat. “Wake up! No wonder they call you Bear; all you want to do is sleep!” said Ralph. Did I mention my name is Bear? I was rescued from the streets when I was 1 year old and let me tell you, you don’t always see a family of pugs running down a street! Once we were put in a shelter, we were terrified! I remembered Mother’s calm words, “I will protect you don’t need to worry I have been here before.” I still don’t understand what she meant by “I have been here before.”, and now we visit each other every Wednesday or so, but today was Monday. I knew by Alissa moaning and complaining about school. “Come on you big loaf!” said Rudolph. So, I stood up and followed Rudolph to the dining table were Mom, Dad, and Allissa were waiting. Once I figured out where mom put the food bowl I ran and ran and... fell on my belly as I stood up I heard everyone laughing I put my head down as I heard more intense laughing then heard Alissa say, “Come here boy,” as she patted her lap so I ran and fell and stood up and jumped onto her lap hiding my face in her shirt. Everyone laughed, I whimpered then everyone stopped laughing and started petting me instead. I jumped down and walked to my food bowl (scared of falling again).

Then the worst part of the day came. “Time to leave,” said Mom as she stood up and started walking to the door, I ran and right before I fell latched on her dress with my teeth and started pulling and tugging soon dad started pulling me, I lost grip on Mom’s dress. Before I could get up, Dad closed the door. I was sad, for the millionth time have they left me, then I always wait for them to come back home. “You’re such a cry baby,” said Rudolph. Out of anger and rage I shouted, “You will never know what it feels like, you always tell me what I do wrong, you never support me you’re just a dumb cat!” Rudolph just stared at me, I got scared, what have I done!? Soon enough, I ran out the back door. What happened, why, how? I was so confused and upset, I couldn’t calm down. I was so nervous, I looked around and then found a crack in the fence - I went through it - took a while but I got through, and it led me straight to the road. I started walking around and heard a familiar voice, it was Rudolph! “Bear where are you?” he shouted. I didn’t even look back, I started running. You would think clumsy old me would fall, but before I had the time to fall, my collar got tangled in vines. Someone saw me and tried to help. I heard Rudolph’s voice in the distance, before the man could pick me up, I ran - I ran as fast as possible, I heard horns honking I ran into a crevice in a fence I ran under the house that was inside the fencing I wasn’t able to hear the animal control van, I could only think, think about Dad, think about Mom, think about Alissa. “Snap out of it!” I

told myself, when I did, I saw a sudden flash of lights. “There he is!” said one man. “Turn off the lights, you’re hurting my eyes!” I yelled. “He’s a feisty one!” said another man; suddenly a snare got hold of me. I tugged as hard as I could - I even bit it! but I couldn’t get out of the snare. I got pulled out into a cage into a van. I was tired, so I took a nap and woke up to barking. “Who are you?” said a dog, she was a poodle. “My name is Bear” I said. “Bear...have I heard that name somewhere?” she asked herself, before I could reply the lights went out “Bedtime!” yelled a woman. “But I just took a nap!” I said. “Stop that yapping!” said a big rough voice. So, I stopped.

In the morning I woke up from barking. “Wake up, Bear,” said the poodle. “What happened?” I asked, “It’s time to go for walks!” said the poodle happily. Someone opened my cage and put a leash around my neck and took me outside. The poodle and a man followed us outside “what’s your name again?” I asked the poodle. “Laila,” she said. “Well, nice to meet you, Laila,” I said. For weeks we had the same routine:

1. Wake up
2. Go for walks
3. Play
4. Look at people walking in the dog room (that’s what we call the room with cages full of dogs including ourselves)
5. And bedtime

One day someone walked in the dog room and looked inside my cage and smiled, “Oh my goodness!” said Laila “What happened?!” I asked, “You’re getting adopted, Bear!!!” yelled Laila happily. I knew I already had a family, but I didn’t know if they would find me or even recognize me. The lady took me out the cage and then went to the front desk my heart raced “What about Laila, will she come with us? Where are we going? Do you have any other dogs at home?” I asked. They laughed. “He must be happy he’s getting adopted,” said the lady. When we got home, I felt nervous, she was nice and all, but I missed my real home. I wouldn’t eat the first few days, the lady would get worried, I wouldn’t care I felt dumb. “I got into all this just for some dumb words,” I told myself knowing that if I would have stayed Rudolph would have forgiven me. I decided to look for a way to escape if I would run to the neighborhood, they would return me, but we lived by a forest. I must run to the forest; they have less chance of finding me. What I didn’t know was that wolves lived there. So, when it was time for a walk, I ran outside fell a couple times but made it to the forest before the lady could put the leash on me. I heard howling in the distance. I don’t know if this sounds strange, but I thought I saw a cat like figure glowing. I started chasing it and ended up lost, soon I saw a small cave I wondered what it was for. I was tired so I slept inside. I awoke to the sound of growling. “What and who are you and why are you here?!” said a big dog. “My

name is Bear I'm a dog like you I didn't mean to scare you, sorry," I said. "Bear? I haven't heard that name in years," said the big dog surprised like myself. Everyone seems to know me. "What are you doing Sandra" said another big dog, "look what I found, his name is Bear," said Sandra. "If Ander sees him, he's cat meat," said the big dog. "What's your name?" I asked. "I'm Sandra he's Lucas." said Sandra, And again, a routine:

1. Wake up
2. Hunt
3. Hunt
4. Hunt
5. Run
6. Play
7. Sleep

It was a different routine, but it only lasted for 5 days or so until Sandra woke me up one day saying, "Wake up, Bear, we have to get out of here! Ander is coming and the forest is on fire hurry!" after I heard that I stood up and looked for a place to go. Then I saw the glowing cat again - it was running to the right. I knew I had to follow it was my only hope. "Head to the right!" I yelled as I started running. "Ander is here and so is the fire!" said Lucas as he hurried us. I ran and fell. In front of me stood a big cat, "Bear!" said Sandra as she started running towards me, I started running to Sandra as Lucas fought the big cat. Sandra grabbed me by the neck and started running far away into a small town. "Go!" said Sandra as she put me on the ground. There was a yelp in the distance. Before I could talk Sandra left. Out of the corner of my eye I saw the glowing cat. I followed the cat with a frown, it led me to Rudolph. We stood there silently. Soon, Alissa broke the ice, "Bear is that you?" Never had I been so happy to see a worried face. When we got home, I got cuddled so much, I had to hide under the bed! Rudolph and I did not talk to each other for days. "How was your trip?" He finally asked. I was surprised he talked to me. "Scary," I said. "I saw a glowing cat," I added. He chuckled, "8 lives kid, 8 lives."

A Life with No Hope

Mateo Sanchez

As a young child I never had the privilege to have both my mother and my father by my side. They were both separated, and to me this was no issue, but over time this became the reason for me developing two completely different personalities, one while I'm with my father and one with my mother. I never put much thought into it as for some reason it was normal to me. Over time, years went by and it was 4th grade, by this time my mother didn't have much time to pick me up from school, so at a young age I would have to sneak out and walk home. This was just casual for me, but over the years this made it, so it was normal to be alone with almost nobody to talk to at home, due to my mom being at work. Over time I created personalities for these occasions since walking home was pretty boring. After the years went by not only was this the new normal for me, but I entered 6th grade and now I'd be taking a long train ride home and to school. This allowed for my mental state to develop into more of its present state. Like most middle schoolers I went through a solid 6 months where I would constantly be depressed and to me this was somewhat normal, and though it didn't allow me to focus at school nor at home, I knew I had to get it over with. The only problem I had was, I didn't have anyone, nor did I think to talk to anyone about it and so as time went by, I stuffed it all into one single personality, and oh boy was that the worst thing I could have done to myself. Though I got through that state of depression I was in, by locking it into one single personality, I had just set myself up for a living hell. Through the months that past I went on happily thinking all my issues were solved, but I still had times where I wouldn't be talking to anyone, especially on the way back from school. I started to feel this mas depression, but not like before, but instead I felt as if anything I did was turned against me. I could be happy for passing a test, but instead this thing would just turn the tables and make me reflect on what would happen if I failed the year. I could be happy I met new people, but this thing would reflect them dead to me reminding me I'll die alone. I went on with my life, shoving this issue to this side, and I would look back to these other personalities as a safe haven, and so the time went by and this monster of a personality, just would not leave me alone. I never went to my parents for this, since every time I'd mention it all they would say is just "man up" or "you're fine" and so I believed them, but this only let my emotions be shredded by this monster I've made. Overall, the stress from being an only child and having advanced classes to keep up with was just too much. I would stay up for hours doing homework and projects just after I finished cleaning the house and helping my mother with any other tasks around the house. I was completely overwhelmed, with the work I had to do and the anxiety of not finishing on time. Not only was I too stressed and busy doing work for school and helping around the house, but I still had these mental issues that were beyond killing me. Over months of this keeping up with me, my mind was at its limit and with me feeding it more and more to do, it shattered. My mental

stability could simply not keep up with itself, I had lost everything. Over time I had nothing to do but simply not show my true emotions as this would only hurt me more and more. I was just a ghost in a shell, faking a smile to keep the attention away. A smile was simply not the same, being asked by relatives, “Why so quiet?” or “What's the problem, do you not value being with us?” I was sick and tired of making a fake self to put in front of me just to hide my feelings. All I could do was simply stay quiet and keep it as far away as possible. As if I was stuck in a maze of mirrors, I don't know who I am anymore, nor do I even know who is the real me.

Editor's Choice Poem: The Story of the Beautiful Sea

Estefani Moreno

I went to once again to visit the sea, it called me

There was a part of me who stills sees her, I feel glee

Her reflection was in the ocean, she was stunning like the beauty in the sea

Shocked, I was speechless never did I think I would see her once again looking at me

In a blink of an eye, she faded in the ocean, shocking I was desperate in seeing her once again

I wish it was easy seeing her as counting one to ten

I sailed the sea looking for her, several days pass by and I couldn't find her

The sea called me, she was the reflection of her face, it was like the ocean called me

Looking at the sea I see the reflection of her face, it was like ocean called me

When I close my eyes, I think of the ocean and I see her, looking at the sea, it was her I'd see

Sailing on a journey to find her was difficult, but I'd do anything to see her beauty

I knew searching for her was now my duty

I'd spent days and nights in search, I was getting tired

But I had to stay hopeful, she was a pretty young woman that I'd desired

Days turn into months and nothing, I decided my journey would end there

I realized that she is my ocean, and that's something I was glad to share

When I think of the ocean, I see her, she ocean, she's my ocean that isn't going

She is my beloved ocean; she is the ocean that I will forever take care

She is the ocean that speaks to me, every time I see the sea

She is my lovely sea, that loves me and speaks to me

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