



# LITERARY MAGAZINE

*A yearly collection of original works from the  
Outschool Learner Community*

MARCH 2021

# COLORS OF EMOTIONS

*Zahra, Age 11*

So many hues  
Dancing in front of my eyes.  
Reds, Yellows, and Blues,  
Emotions coming from all sides.

Red is the color of angry,  
And also, excitement, strength, and energy.  
Red is the color of blood,  
That pumps throughout my body as I  
play with mud.

Yellow stands for happiness and clarity,  
But can also be honor and loyalty.  
Yellow is the color of the sun,  
And of course, fun.

Blue means trust, peace, and serenity,  
Another is integrity.  
Blue is the color of the ocean,  
That brings about a peaceful emotion.

So many hues,  
Dancing in front of my eyes.  
Reds, Yellows, and Blues,  
Emotions coming from all sides.



## KOALA PAINT

*Nikole, Age 11*

## LOVE IS ALL WE NEED

*Monet, Age 7*



## I AM SNOW

*Hava, Age 8*

When I was sitting

In the snow,

I thought,

What if I am snow in the cold?

I am fluffy,

And you can make a  
snowman out of me.



## LOVE

Peyton, Age 9

## DORMANT

Nadia, Age 8

Woosh, woosh, woosh  
Howls the wind outside a cave.  
A gust carries snowflakes  
Over brightly blanketed bushes.

Whisper, whisper, whisper  
There lives an animal inside.  
Safe from the cold,  
It's a big, burly bear!

Ronc-shhh, ronc-shhh, ronc-shhh  
The bear slumbers soundly,  
Its snores echoing off the walls  
Of its dark, dank den.

Thummmmp-thump, thummmmp-thump,  
thummmmp-thump  
Goes the bear's heartbeat slow-ly.  
Its belly swollen with fish and berries,  
Bear's barely breathing.

Brrrr, brrrr, brrrr  
The bear's temperature drops  
Deep in hibernation,  
Its energy carefully, calmly conserved.

Sigh, sigh, sigh  
I am like bear,  
Safe inside my shelter  
Waiting, watching, wishing...

For the long hard winter to pass,  
Taking comfort in knowing  
That spring will one day return,  
And I can emerge  
To interact with the world again.



# DESTINATION-LESS JOURNEY

*Cleo, Age 11*

A gust of wind. A howling wind. A breeze teasing me while it moves past me. The grass. Vibrant grass. Grass crunching under my feet as I walk. Walking. It gives the impression of a destination, even if no destination exists. They say it is the journey that is important. Is there a journey, if there is no destination? Wonders. Thoughts. They are all I have. These and the wind. These and the grass. These and the constantly flowing rivers under my feet. Crunch. Crunch. The steps of a far-off animal. Drip. Drip. The steady dribble of water. Resting. Time passing. Counting how many days and nights I have slept and walked through since I started this destination-less journey.

# AARON

*Shea, Age 13*

Over the hill, she lied,  
Her best friend Aaron by her side,  
Even though she didn't know why,  
She could see him even though he had died,  
She looked over to his sorrow filled eye,  
Oh, how he cried and cried and cried,  
She has known ever since July,  
He should be high upon the sky,  
She tried so hard not to cry,  
At just the sight of his crying eye,  
Oh, how she'd wish he would just say 'goodbye,'  
But he cried and cried and cried.



# HAIRCUTTING IN THE SICKNESS

*Chloe, Age 4*



# 2020 FOR ME

*Gabriella, Age 11*

I woke up to the sounds of birds singing  
and snow falling.  
It's 2020!  
The year I had opportunities, hopes,  
and dreams.  
I was so happy!

January passed with not one single regret.  
February arrived and it was the best yet.  
But when March came I felt like I lost a bet.

It started just fine but now look at the time.  
Two weeks at home all alone.  
No friends, no events.  
Just me and my family.

I thought it would be fine, it's only 2 weeks.  
But 2 went to 4 and then more and more.  
And now it is the 4th of July.  
No fireworks, no vacation.  
Just me and my family.

August came along, I saw some friends.  
It was good.  
September is here!  
The best month of the year!  
My birthday was a blast,  
not entirely better than the last.  
But enough to remember it as a good past.

October comes.  
Here comes the spooky fun.  
Only half the normal amount of candy,  
and then the day was done.  
November came and it was not the same.  
We locked all the doors and said no more  
and it was like June déjà vu.

Thanksgiving came and it was definitely not  
the same.  
No grandma, no aunts and uncles.  
Just me and my family.

Lastly December came.  
It is the season to be jolly.  
We hung up our stockings and holly.  
Open our presents with no grandma, no  
huge meal.  
Just me and my family.

Lastly, it's New Year's!  
The party was awesome.  
But no ball drop, no cousins or aunts or  
uncles.  
Just me and my family.

2021 is here!  
But have no fear,  
I have a feeling this year will be alot better  
than last year!  
It can only go up from here!



## THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT

*Bihaan, Age 11*



## PARIS

Elena, Age 10

## BEING KIND MATTERS

Sloane, Age 6

I matter because I treat other people kindly every single day,  
 No matter their skin color, all day we can play!  
 No matter what you like to do,  
 It will always be me and you!  
 Even though we like different foods at lunch,  
 We can always eat together in a bunch.  
 No matter where you come from, we can always be friends.  
 We can enjoy different games and still be friends until the  
 school year ends.  
 We can always be friends, no matter what you can or can't do.  
 And remember, it will always be me and you!



## MY FAMILY IS COMING

Norah, Age 14



# THE FEAST OF PEACE (ABRIDGED)

Gemma, Age 8

There was once a beautiful forest full of tall ancient trees and a trickling stream. On one side of the forest, laid ice-covered mountains. On the other, a meadow covered in sweet flowers, fruit trees, and a dry stream bed. The mountains were where the dragon tribe of Snow Talons called home. Their cave walls were glittery with icicles that reflected the sun. The Snow Talons were smooth, scaly dragons, with snowy white skin. Large, pointy wings with rubbery membranes, and spikes decorated their backs. The meadows were home to a tribe of flying foxes, the Fox Wings. They lived in grass huts and were master gardeners. The Fox Wings were red and furry, with white tipped tails and feathery orange wings.

One day, a Snow Talon and a Fox Wing both made their way to the forest in search of food and water. Both tribes had been struggling to keep resources flowing. The creatures saw each other and quickly scrambled behind a tree as they recognized an enemy figure. After a moment, the Snow Talon asked, "Why are you here?" "What is your name?"

The Fox Wing replied, "I'm Bloom. I'm here because my tribe has a water shortage and our plants are dying. What is YOUR name, and why are YOU here?"

The Snow Talon replied, "I'm Graupel and I'm here because MY tribe is dealing with a food shortage. Everyone is worried about their families starving, and we've been rationing our last bits of food."

Bloom understood what Graupel was going through. She told Graupel of her village's troubles saying, "My village has been feeling pretty desperate too. The stream has run dry, and we have run out of water and all of our plants are dying."

Graupel asked Bloom, "Do you think there's a way we could work together? We have ice and water, and if you have water, you'll have food. Maybe enough to share?"

Bloom hesitated, then replied slowly, "Well... our tribes have been enemies for so long, do you think they would put our history aside and work together?"

The two creatures discussed, considering all different solutions. Finally, the two new friends thought they had a solid plan created and headed home with hope in their hearts.

The next morning, Bloom and Graupel awoke with strong hunger pains. Bloom picked one of the last apples from the tree. It wasn't the prettiest apple she'd seen; it was small, soft, and bruised. Her breakfast did nothing to fill her tummy or quench her thirst. Graupel spent hours that morning trying to find something to eat. Finally, she caught one, small fish that did nothing to take her hunger pains away.

That afternoon, the two friends ran through their villages yelling about a group meeting that would take place in the forest that evening.

Evening came, and Bloom and Graupel headed to the forest with the tribes following. When the tribes saw the other, they growled, hissed, and spat. They weren't happy to see their enemies. Bloom and Graupel stood together on a huge tree stump. Everyone's mouths hung wide open, as they looked on in awe. The two friends began their speech, "We have brought you here today because our tribes, families, and friends are suffering. We need to make peace with our enemies, and spread love and forgiveness through the lands. We need to share our resources and work together to bring the water and food back in abundance."

Graupel continued, "Because we can share our water with the Fox Wings, they will be able to grow food again."

Bloom said, "Our gardens will be full of life, and we will do our part by sharing our harvest with the Snow Talons."

Suddenly, there was a ruckus so loud that no one could hear Bloom and Graupel speaking. One Fox Wing yelled, "How are we supposed to work with them?!"

"Yeah, they will probably kill us with killer vines once we give up our water!" a Snow Talon shouted back.

Another Fox Wing exclaimed, "What's to stop them from drowning us when they give us their water?"

Then a different type of shriek from the audience rang out, "Anything has to be better than this torture! My family is dying and we've had enough. I give in."

Bloom and Graupel tried to calm everyone down, then yelled in thunderous unison, "CALM DOOWWNN!" Both tribes spoke not a word and looked at them wide-eyed.

"If you want to survive, you are going to have to work together!" Bloom said.

Graupel then summoned the two tribal Queens to come forth and make a truce. The queens knew that this was the only way, and so they elegantly bowed to one another, and shook talon and paw. It was understood that peace was now upon them.

The next day, each Queen gave the order to start helping right away. First, the Snow Talons worked together to break the ice apart. The ice pieces floated downstream to the forest, where it melted and filled the dry stream bed farther down in the meadow. The Fox Wings were delighted to see water flowing through their meadow again! They immediately got to work to plant new seeds. With some water, lots of helping hands, and a little magic, many crops began to grow quickly.

A short time later, the tribes met again in the forest for a large feast. They munched and crunched, and filled their bellies until they were stuffed. This hadn't happened in a long time, and they were grateful and overjoyed. The night was filled with good food, AND good company. Both tribes realized that they had been silly for carrying on feuds of the past, and quite enjoyed conversations with the other tribe. The festivities lasted well into the night, and that night Snow Talons slept next to Fox Wings, and Fox Wings slept next to Snow Talons. The forest and the surrounding lands were filled with peace and order once again.





## RAINBOW ROCK

Antonia, Age 5

## BARNACLES AND STORMS

*Swaggery Shark-hopper Callum, Age 7*

Ahoy me hearties! Do not worry or  
feel lonely in the wind,

And the GIGANTIC waves of the  
stormy weather!

I am sending you smiles, good  
wishes, and a big mug of sweet  
lemonade to bring happiness to  
your day!

Wherever you are, stop and listen  
to the birds.

Hear their soft joyful songs!

Look at the colorful leaves spinning  
and dancing in the air,

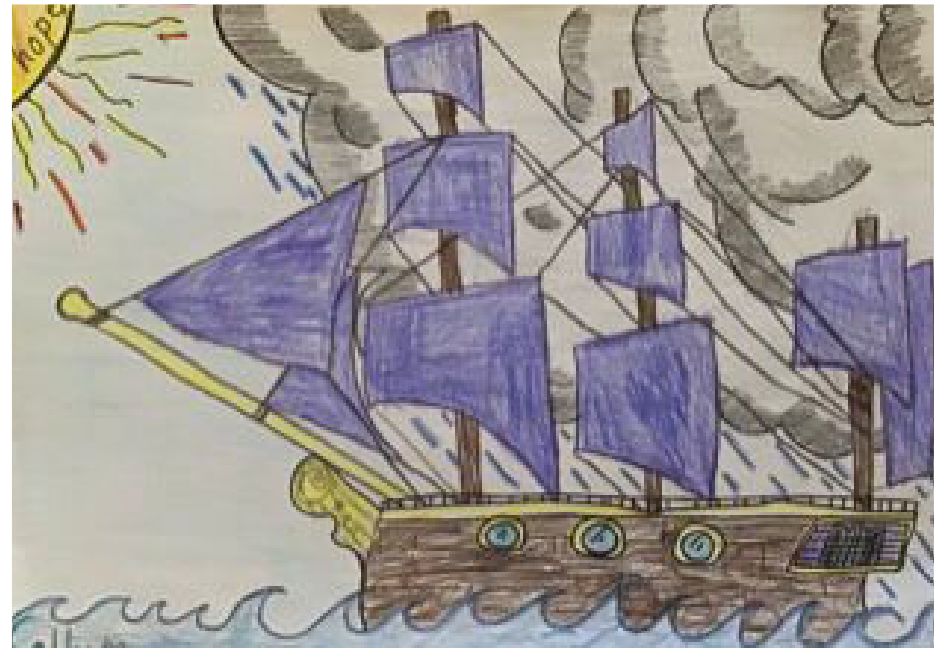
Feel the warm sunshine on  
your face.

When you are feeling scared or  
angry,

Stand tall and yell  
"Aaaaarrrrggghhh!" into the air!

Have hope no matter the barnacles  
or storms you battle,

You are never alone on your ship in  
the storm!



# RIDING THE WAVE

*Kate, Age 8*

As my surfboard slid across the colossal wave, the exhilaration burned inside me.

Every move I made. Every turn I took. There was apprehension all around me.

As the wave chased me further and further my future felt more ominous. The wave got faster and faster. And I got slower and slower. The wave was crashing down. But I didn't stop. I kept pushing. But the more I pushed, the further away the land seemed. The further away survival seemed. The wave was a hawk getting ready to swoop down, and I was its prey. The wave crashed down. I felt no hope...

(2 days later...)

I was in a hospital bed when I peered open my eyes to find out I had been in a coma. I had survived, but with damage. I did not know how I could recuperate...

Two broken ankles...

One broken knee...

Two sprained wrists...

And a cracked spine...

I slowly tilted my head up. I saw smiles. I saw frowns. But most of all...I saw hope...

(1 year later...)

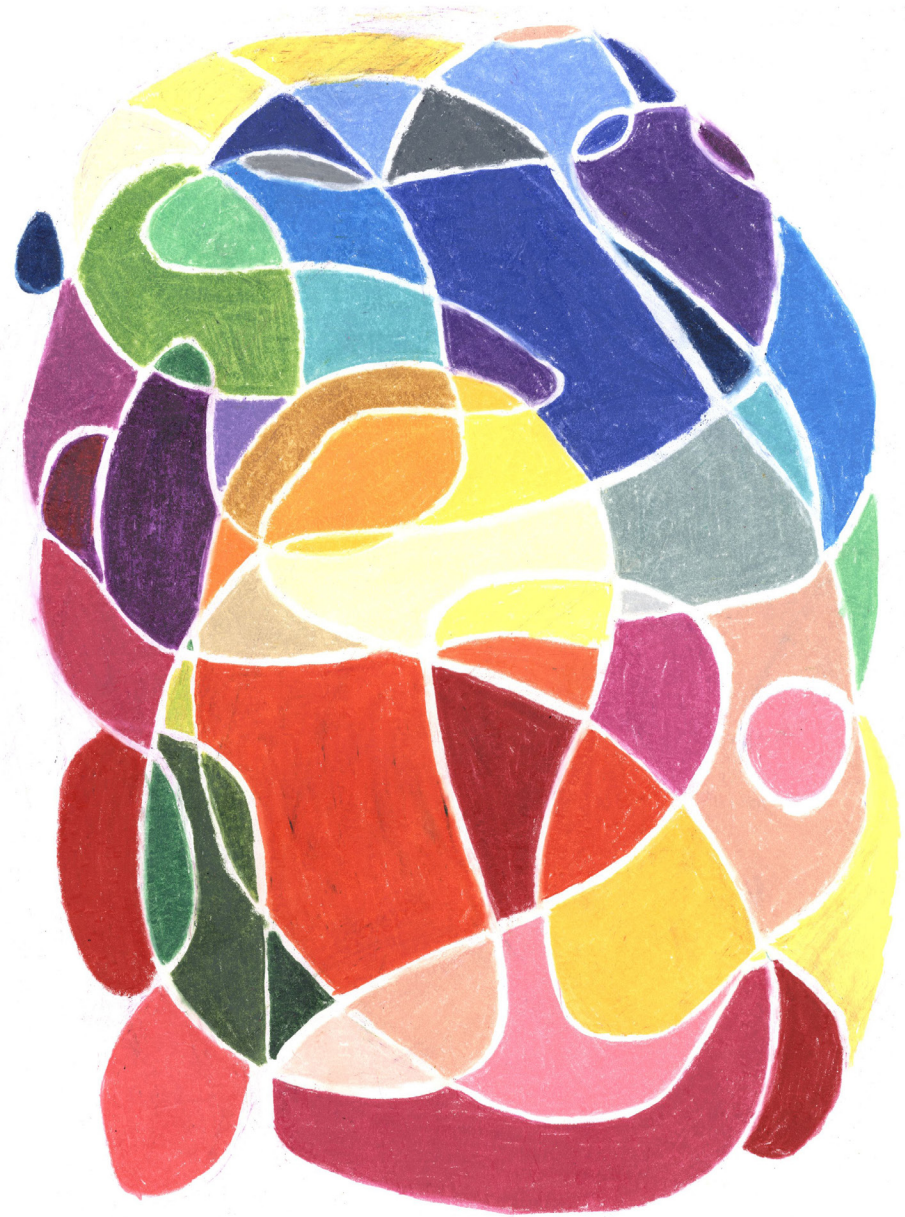
I was sitting down, in a chair...

I had recuperated...

I never surfed again...

But I did do something else...

Share my stories with everyone in the world.



**VIBRANT**

*Veda, Age 11*

# FOOD FIGHT

Riley, Age 16

MUSHROOM: Hello Pasta, what will you be auditioning for today?  
PASTA: Favorite food.  
MUSHROOM: Excellent! Do you have a monologue prepared?  
PASTA: Yes I do.  
MUSHROOM: Ok then, whenever you are ready.  
PASTA: Ahem, hi my name is Pasta and I'm your favorite! Not just your favorite food, but your favorite many things. I am an excellent tour guide as I am made in many countries. I've even picked up a few of those countries languages dating back thousands of years. I have much knowledge of this world and can take form as many shapes; yes plants, animals, large and small. If you like me traditional, I am just fine being cheddar cheese and elbow pasta or modern and vegan made out of beans. Been here for a while and have always made you smile. You can't deny I cheer you up when you cry! Number one comfort food, number one fancy dish, number one best in bulk, number one easy meal. I am number one and the real deal!  
MUSHROOM: Thank you Pasta, I want you to come back tomorrow with a new monologue explaining why you are, or should be the favorite food, with more facts.

The next day...

MUSHROOM: Ready?  
PASTA : Yes.  
MUSHROOM: Ok!  
PASTA: Hi my name is Pa-  
WAFFLE: Sorry I'm late!

A waffle says, bursting through the audition room.

WAFFLE: Oh! Who are you?  
PASTA: I'm Pasta. Oh are you auditioning too?  
WAFFLE: Yes!  
PASTA: For what role?  
WAFFLE: Favorite food!  
PASTA: Hahaha!!  
WAFFLE: What's so funny?  
PASTA: You won't get cast as favorite food, I will!  
MUSHROOM: Waffle, please leave the room and wait for your audition. Pasta please resume.  
PASTA: No, I want to hear what this dripping with syrup circle has to say.  
WAFFLE: Drippy circle? You mean pancake with abs?  
PASTA: No, I meant what I said.  
WAFFLE: So did I noodle brain!

PASTA: It's on!  
WAFFLE: Bring it.  
PASTA: Ok then, 350 types get the crowd really hype! With sauce, meat, veggies, and cheese, I have everyone saying yes please!  
WAFFLE: Oh bravo, but that noodle brain of yours can't comprehend my awesomeness! We got shapes too, have you seen what a Darth Vader waffle maker can do?  
PASTA: Oh! You want to talk about transformation? Go to a pasta making station! You will see the flour turn into something magnificent, simple shapes to flowers!  
WAFFLE: Thats fine, you're still a disgrace to the whole entire food race! Lacking nourishment and encouragement, you're feeding on negative effects and too many calories!  
PASTA: That's not true! I am the pride of Italy, people really enjoy having me in every country, state, and city!  
WAFFLE: I got spice waffles, served plain ain't nothing nice! Talking about history, pride of Belgium here! You're jealous of all my flavor I hold dear! In my pockets, syrup, powdered sugar, fruit too, imagine that on pasta. Eww!  
PASTA: Sorry to burst your bubble, but you need to get your head out of the rubble, pasta got lotsa things you don't! We are made out of chocolate now which is dope!  
WAFFLE: Wanna talk about dope? Ok let's go! Waffles inspired the first pair of Nike's and the world's largest waffle cone is 8 feet long! Woah!  
PASTA: Fun fact I got, make sure you stay awake for the amount of information you will intake! In Greek mythology, gods had devices with strings made out of dough it was an early reference to pasta you know.... October is national pasta month! In 1957 people were convinced pasta grew on trees and looked like this.  
WAFFLE: Yeah not. I don't think so! You be boring, you be bland, the waffles won't give you a hand. There's a reason Eleven is obsessed with us, cuz we got something better than the rest!  
MUSHROOM: Waffle! Pasta! Enough! Leave the audition room immediately!

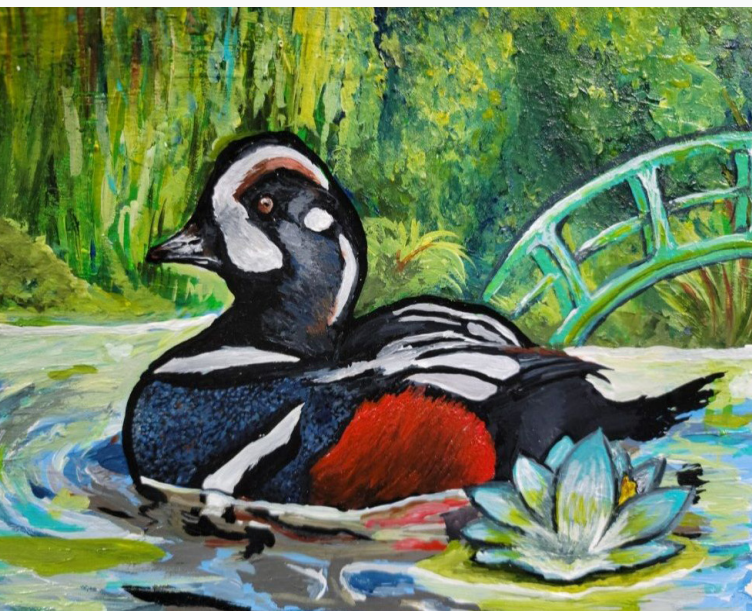
Pasta and Waffle storm out and run into a new food.  
PASTA & WAFFLE: Who are you?  
MEAT: I am Meat!  
Smiling evilly.  
MEAT: And you are in for a real treat!



## UNTITLED

Ava, Age 9





## UNTITLED

Bria, Age 14



## SUNFLOWER

Sora, Age 7



## THE PUPPY

Noelle, Age 5

# WELCOME TO GREEK MYTHS: ANIMAL EDITION

*Liam, Age 10*

Today I will be telling the story of Arachne the Rat and Athena the Cat.

There once was a rat named Arachne and she was very masterful with a loom. Her talent was known all over Greece, but one day things started going downhill. Arachne thought she was as talented as the goddess Athena and she told everyone that fact (which was false). One day she was performing in front of a crowd of rats and they were amazed. She bragged about how she was better than Athena, but then a frail old rat emerged from the crowd. The rat said, "you don't mean that, do you?"

"Yes, I do," Arachne said.

Then the rat turned into a cat and said, "I am the goddess Athena and I challenge you to a weave-off to see if you are right. Do you accept?"

"Yes," Arachne said. The next day they met at the same spot. They were so close it was almost a tie! It was so close that Zeus the Hamster came down from Olympus to look at the masterpieces. He saw that Athena's was a beautiful scene about everybody living together in peace. Whereas Arachne's humiliated the gods. Zeus was so enraged that not only did he declare Athena the winner, but he turned Arachne into a spider and kicked her out of Greece.



## RAINBOW LINING

*Mae, Age 11*



# THE WORLD WOULD BE GREATER

Arinze, Age 6

The world would be greater if things could grow more,  
If the sun was brighter and it was cold no more.

We would be able to swim and have fun,  
Eat ice cream with anyone—because the world be as bright  
as the sun.

If the moon was up close we could see it so well,  
Earth would have a friend to share love with no matter the spell.  
And all of us here on Earth we would not need to wait,  
Because here on Earth our love will grow great.



## WHIMSICAL WINDOW

Ellie, Age 11



## THE SHADED GLOBE

Olivia, Age 10



# MANIFEST DESTINY

Aubrey, Age 12

The city was constructed in an endless rainforest in a truly gorgeous area. Its beauty is matched with clear healthy skies and tropical birds surrounding the humid environment.

The climate brought great importance to the plants and animals here, but it also influenced the architectural design. The engineers took the weather into great consideration for their buildings. All the houses and apartments were designed to take full advantage of the humid climate for their plants and lush gardens, giving the people living in them a sense that the outside forest had moved into their home. Just glancing through a window you would find a mix of greens, yellows, and their vibrant variants. The city living in harmony with nature.

The skyline is riddled with skyscrapers which turn into silhouettes from the lowering sun. The quality of life here is unmatched by any other. Many cultures and people have come to leave their mark, not just in cuisine, but in the city's identity. What historically was a city with no diversity or variation has grown into an amalgamation of differences. May those differences be religion, race, sexuality, or identity, these people make an impact in this metropolis and unite the 6 million people who live here.

It's this multicultural identity that has truly left its mark. Hundreds of coffeehouses, bistros, restaurants, and a plethora of culinary choices. Those who do not fancy eating can sightsee the magnificent scenery, snap a photo of the birds and animals to show off to their friends and family, or watch a movie in the old-timey theaters that only play the 1950 black and white films.

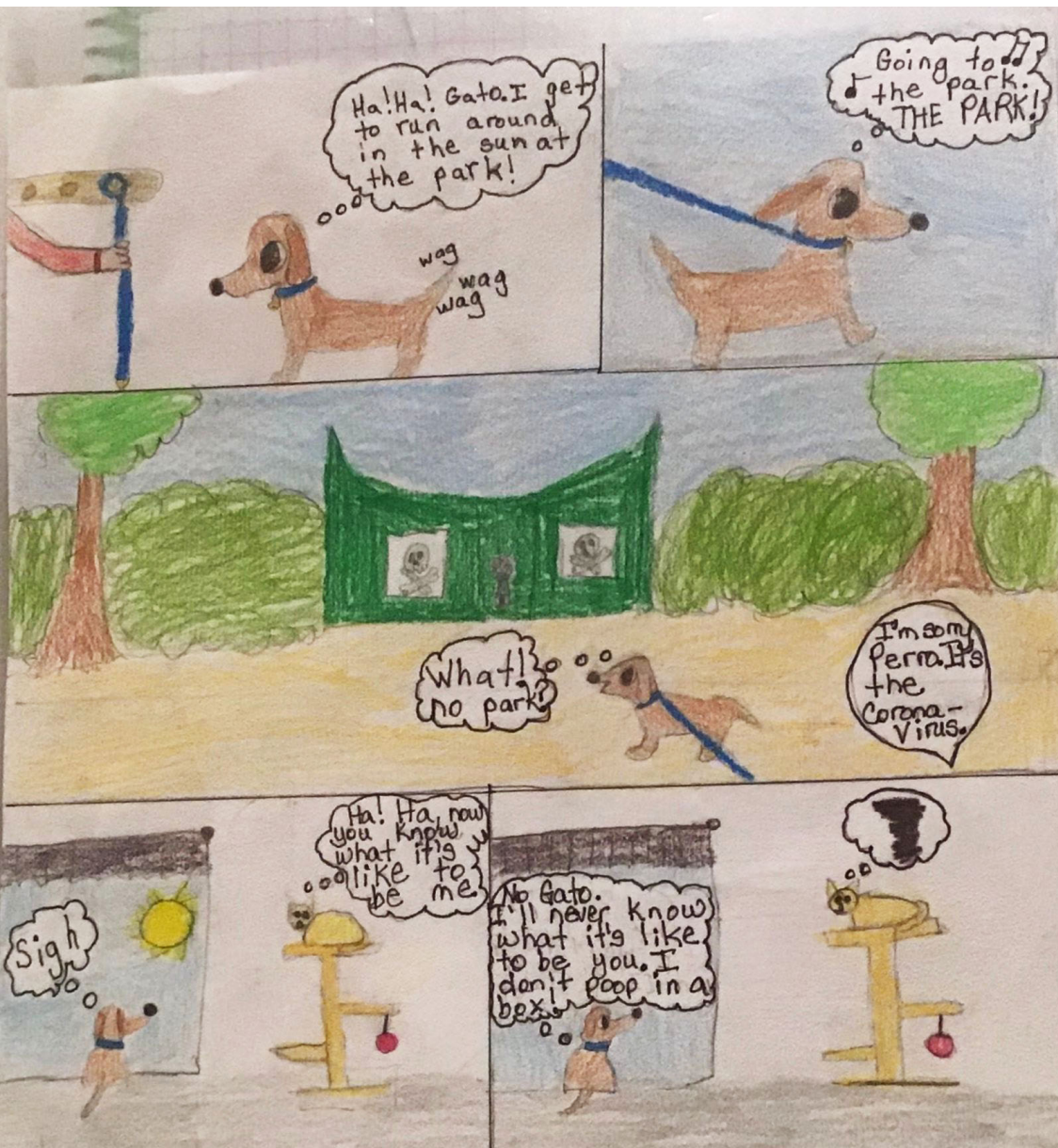
As the harvest moon rises, I close my eyes, the cool night air washes over me. This is a perfect world, this is a good world, this is the world that will compete with no other. This is 'A World Anew.'



## MOTHER EARTH

Julia, Age 9





## THE ADVENTURES OF GATO AND PERRO, VOLUME 1

Allita, Age 12

## A MOUSE'S ADVENTURE: A FUNNY POEM

Ezra, Age 8

Little Jack

Ate a rack

And what a wonderful rack that was!

But it had a mouse

That mouse Skuttered

Until Jack went AH-CHU!

And the mouse was safe again.



## UNTITLED

Lexi, Age 12



# HOPE IS

Charlie, Age 7

Hope is yellow sunshine,  
Listening to birds sing in the morning,  
And thinking I am going to fly to  
Massachusetts to see my Grandma again.

Beautiful is my sister's laugh,  
Fall colors, a full moon  
And making art.

Fun is playing outside - no masks,  
Sledding in the snow, Halloween,  
Building castles and forts.

Happiness is a warm hug,  
sleeping late, Christmas morning  
And fried chicken with French fries.

Love is my family.



## AMABIE

Nina, Age 9



## UNTITLED

Chala, Age 8

# MY MISSING MASK

Axel, Age 10

Oh no, I cry, I forgot my mask!

What will they say?

What will they ask?

Will they scream?

Will they shout?

Will they kick me out?

What will they do?

Will they let me in?

Will they give me a shopping bag to  
cover my chin?

Wait... what Mom?

You have a plan?

You know how to get me out of  
this jam?

No, I won't!

Don't even ask!

I will NOT wear my sister's pink  
princess mask.



## MATH OUTSIDE

Marvin, Age 6

## IT'S SPRING!

Dyer, Age 10

It's Spring, blooming buds,  
Flowers growing everywhere,  
Beautiful sunshine.



## FAIRIES VS COVID

Pearl, Age 7



# A WORLD ANEW: MAKE IT REAL

Nadia, Age 11

"Hey wait up, Austin!" a short girl on her blue-pink bicycle yelled.

"You're just too slow, Lila!" Austin called back, as he turned around and stuck out his tongue.

"You have to wear your mask properly!" Lila snapped as she placed her own unicorn mask over her nose and mouth, checking the nose clip for proper fitting. Lila looked ahead, her pale green eyes widened.

"LOOK OUT! CAR!"

But it was too late, the big grey truck swerved to the side hitting Austin's front wheel launching him into Lila.

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Lila winced as she looked around, her long black hair was tangled up and her purple shirt's bottom was cut up and had what looked like her mom's favorite dark red lipstick smeared on it.

"A-austin?" Lila croaked, she squinted and looked around, she was in a bright white room.

"Y-yeah?" a voice next to her squeaked. Lila jumped.

"Where are you?" she whispered, looking toward where she heard the voice.

"No, where are you?" Austin said, suddenly a hand stuck through the invisible screen.

"AHHHHHHHH!" Lila screamed, she backed into the other wall.

A tall woman with braided hair in a blue uniform rushed in.

"What is going on here?" Her thickly accented voice boomed.

"Where's my brother? What day is it? Where are we? Why am I here??" Lila blurted out, she straightened up in her hospital bed. The nurse narrowed her brown eyes and pursed her lips.

"Your brother is on the other side of the Invisi-Partition, it is Monday, Sector 31, 2030, you are in the

Blu Bird Hospital. You are here because you were hit by a car, since you weren't paying attention." the nurse snapped.

"Well, it was a truck..." Lila started but decided not to continue due to the stare she was getting from the nurse.

She looked over and extended her hand,

"Woah! That's scary!" Austin said from the other side.

"Stop acting so immature, here." The nurse huffed, she pushed something on her wrist and the wall disappeared.

"Woah!" Austin and Lila said simultaneously. The nurse let a smile tug at the ends of her mouth.

"I am Nurse 23. I will be the one you will call if you need anything, but I think you two are good to go anyways." The nurse said. She flicked her wrist and she was gone. Austin stood up.

"That was awesome!" he said, he went over and helped Lila out of the bed.

"Austin! Your clothes are all fixed! So are mine!" Lila gasped, she fingered the bottom of her shirt, it looked brand new. Austin looked down.

"I feel better too!" Austin said, wiggling his fingers. Suddenly the siblings heard barking outside of the room, and scampering claws. Lila's eyes widened, but instead of walking back, she grabbed Austin's wrist and tugged him through the Invisi-Partition.

They gasped, they stood in the center of a big white building, doctors and nurses were walking around them, no, some flying around them, or even walking through the walls.

"Where's the way out?" Lila said under her breath.

"Why, right through the wall, of course!" a voice behind them said.

"Nurse 23! What about the doors?" Austin said.

"Pffft, doors, where are you from? 2020?" Nurse 23 joked, her voice was light but she eyed them suspiciously. Lila gulped, well, they were from 2020.

"C'mon you two." Nurse 23 snapped, grabbing them both by the wrists, she plunged them through the wall.

Lila's breath caught in her throat. There were huge ships flying around and big buildings which scraped the blue sky.

"How is no one wearing any masks..." Austin gasped.

"What do you mean? Why would we wear masks?" Nurse 23 eyed Austin and huffed.

"I mean you know COVID-19?" Austin said looking at the Nurse.

"That ended eight years ago." Nurse 23 said roughly. "Anyways, I will leave you two here, Suzy's Coffee Shop is down the street and Dominoes is also down the street if you're hungry." Nurse 23 said, she flicked her wrist and disappeared.

"Woah" Austin breathed.

"I'm hungry, what do you think future pizza tastes like?" Lila said, rubbing her stomach.

"Look!" Austin said. A couple of cops sat at a table and chatted happily with a black man who had thick green glasses. He had his arm around a white woman who wore her hair in a bun. She smiled brightly as she talked to the cops and two gay friends by their side.

"A lot has changed huh?" a voice behind them said. Lila and Austin turned around. A large golden retriever stood behind them.

"Walter?!" Austin gasped.

"Yeah! Here in the future they made these collars so you can understand animals." Walter barked, he wagged his tail and jumped on Lila and Austin. Lila laughed and rubbed Walter's back, while Austin examined Walter's collar.

"I heard someone say pizza. Let's go have some?" Walter yipped. He started to trot away, his paws in perfect rhythm.

"Well?" Walter said, he turned around, his big pink tongue lolling out. Lila and Austin smiled at each other before running to catch up with their dog.

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Lila startled awake at the sound of barking, she lay on her big red couch, her purple shirt was still shredded and her hair was tangled up. She looked up, her mom was washing her mask in their big white sink, the TV was on, a tall man in a suit was telling the news.

"It was just a dream..." Austin said.

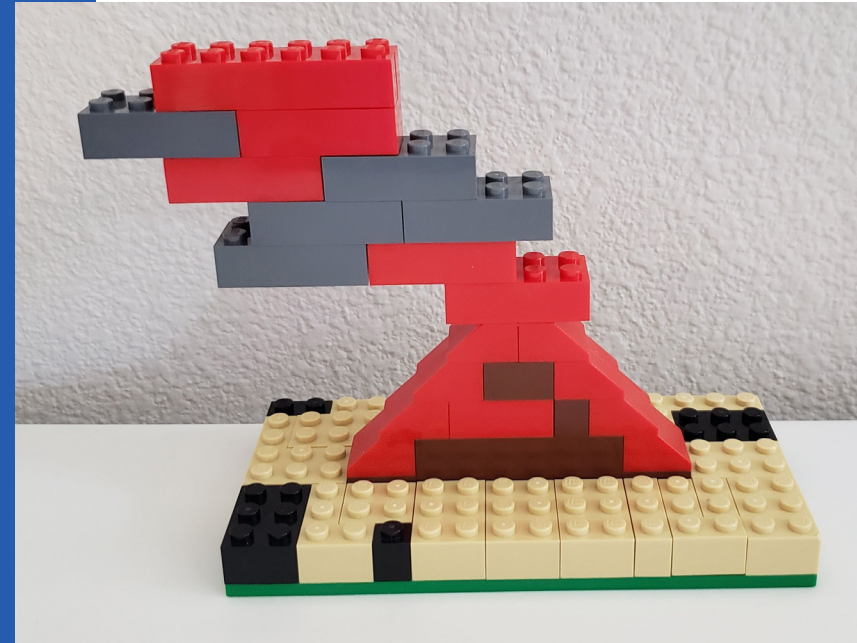
"It really was." Lila whispered, she looked at Walter and then at her brother.

You can make it real. A voice said. Austin and Lila looked around, their parents didn't seem to notice the voice. They looked at Walter. He smiled a little doggy smile. Make it real.

# TO UNTIE THE STRINGS

*Alaina, Age 11*

Anxiety, OCD, ADD,  
A string for each one.  
Them tied together is not that fun.  
It feels like a bracelet that you can't take off.  
In ways it may be useful, or helpful even.  
But until I can find a way to work with it,  
Without taking it off,  
I'll just have to try,  
And not give up.



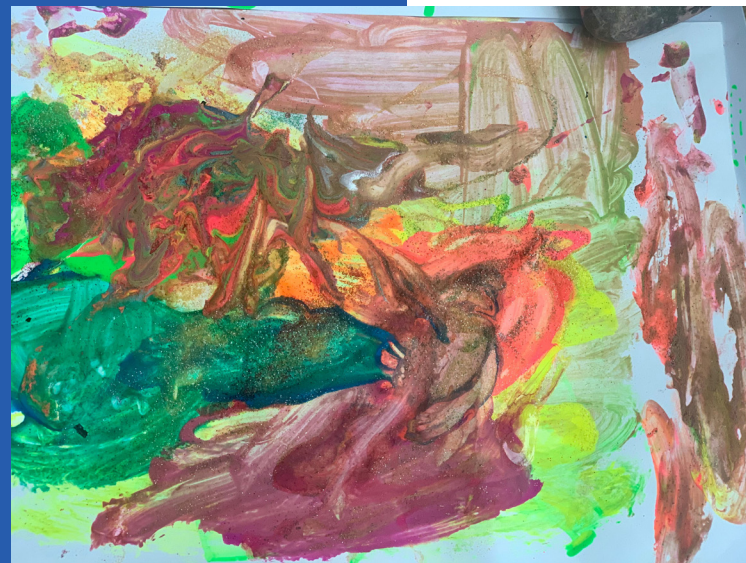
## VOLCANO

*Orion, Age 4*



## STILL PRETTY

*Ayla, Age 7*



## BLOBS OF COLOUR

*Daisy, Age 5*



# WHEN THE DRAGON CAME

Airysa, Age 10

Hello, my name is Reginn, and now I am going to share my story of when the dragon came.

I ran as quiet as a mouse across a network of tunnels and caverns in a mountain far over the misty mountains as the sound of hammers ringing like bells followed me. I skidded to a halt and peeked into a room where the craftsman dwarves were making gleaming golden hoards, crowns, and silver necklaces for the king of men and elvish lords. The precious yet beautiful treasure gleamed like the moon and sun meshed together as light swept over them.

I had longed ever since I could remember to be in the place of those dwarves tinkering and creating the beautiful treasure my people had been creating ever since the beginning of time. However, I knew that only male dwarves could make craft. To me, every day was the horrible reality of what I should, shouldn't and must not do. There was one time, I remember when my father had given me a block of soapstone and I made a miniature harp out of it. The harp had become my lucky stone now. I went to another room and hid behind a statue as I watched the dwarves carved goblets and harps out of the precious gold. I imagined if I were in their place knowing everything and feeling the hum of the rock as I worked.

I sneaked back out and looked across the horizon, shining bright with the setting sun, but wait, what was that? Suddenly the pines on the mountain roared with the moaning wind, shrieking louder than I had ever heard before. I saw Dale ringing a warning of something. It was when I saw the fire spreading through the forest and the desperate cry of "dragon!" did my senses come from blank to pure panic. I ran and just ran, my limbs moved before I knew they were. I don't know where I was running to for there was no escape from a dragon's attack.

I ran out of the door that led to the underground river, just in time to see a huge, absolutely huge and frightening bulk of a dragon. I froze and terror coursed through me. My blood seemingly ran cold with dread and fear, before a question surfaced in my head, "Would I make it alive?"

I heard crashing, screaming, roaring, and other horrible noises that I cannot describe. The smoke and dust swooshed into the underground river network where I was hiding. Some dwarves burst in, wearied and bruised. It was getting hard to breathe and see. I couldn't even see my hand in front of my face. I thought that I would suffocate and die. I passed out. I was blissfully out of the horror.

When I woke, I was alone and air was much more plentiful again. I scrambled out of the caves to see what I hoped might be over. Fire, dragon fire burning almost everything away mercilessly and the bodies of fallen dwarves lit up beneath the eerie shine of the moon. Dwarves and people mixing and fleeing as best as they could as another flame came from the main entrance to my city, to my home and wiped out a big section of the fleeing dwarves and men.

I looked desperately among the crowds of fleeing people covered in a thin, yet suffocating smog for my family. I could not see them. I was crying before I could stop myself. I reassured myself that I could not see everyone in the smog and besides, there were people who might have escaped first, there must be. I ran with the crowd and followed the flow. Every yell and shout was deafening, for they were often very loud and every whoosh and boom of dragon fire reminded me of what happened to these poor dwarves and men could easily happen to me. I was crying this whole time. For what I might have lost, for my home, and for the dwarves and men who had lost basically lost everything but their life. I hope I haven't. I looked back and saw the Lonely Mountain, Erebor, smoking like a fire in a fireplace.



## SPRING BUNNY

Jazzy, Age 11





**TOGETHER**  
Jolee, Age 12



**OVER THE RAINBOW**  
Niyanta, Age 6



**FAMILY TIME**  
Abigail, Age 10



# TALES FROM THE UNIVERSAL BACKLOG: A WORLD ANEW

Ty, Age 14

Theo heard his parents arguing in the kitchen about the field trip predicament.

"It's too dangerous," Mom said, "If anyone notices even a slight difference about him, he could get taken away."

"But we have to let him go," Dad argued, "We can't keep him at home forever. He needs to be around other kids and we're running out of excuses at this point."

Theo Argus knew that his parents have worried about him all his life. He wished they could see him as more than just a secret. He wished they would trust him to take care of himself. After all, he had more experience with his ability than they did.

They didn't even find out what he was capable of until he was three years old. One day he was playing in the park, and when he saw an angry parent nearby. He turned to his mom and said, "She mad, Mama!" pointing at the lady. His mother was startled to see that his usual hazel eyes had turned a glimmering red. She immediately scooped him up and hastily walked out of the park.

When they got home, she sat him in front of the TV and watched his eyes closely as she switched channels and noticed that his eyes changed to red at an angry news pundit, blue for a sad soap opera, orange for frustrated game show contestant, and green for kid adopting a dog. She knew that Theo was in danger. Theo was a Paranomaly. And Paranomalys are prohibited.

Theo never knew what it was like to be "normal." All his life he felt it was normal for his vision to turn blue when someone near was sad, or red when they were angry. It took him a long time to realize that when adults said they were "seeing red" or "feeling blue" that they weren't talking about their own vision. When he was still a toddler, he had to wear tiny sunglasses and his parents told everyone he had a lazy eye. When he got bigger and started school, he had to wear colored contacts every time he left the house.

Theo was afraid, along with his Mom, that being on a field trip to the monument in the forest would involve hiking and goofing off and the kids would be looking at each other and interacting instead of staring up at a teacher. Also there would be teachers paying attention and probably guides and guards... a lot of people around feeling a lot of emotions. But he also wanted to go somewhere besides just home and school, and he felt, like his Dad, that he didn't want to make another excuse for missing out. He was excited when Dad won the argument and he loaded on the bus with the other kids.

The bus ride went well, because all the kids were so excited that everyone's eyes had an extra sparkle to them, so he didn't stand out. He had made it the goal of his short life so far not to stand out.

He was walking along down the sloped path, staring off at the distance and looking away from all the other kids, when his vision suddenly turned a dark blue, as if he had slipped on his Sad shades. He was taken aback and glanced all around. Through all his life, he has only seen colors when people or animals were right in front of his eyes. He kept staring at the blue space until he realized that everyone else in his class had moved on. He was left alone.

"Hello," Theo said. "I know you're there." And then he hears a small, low sobbing. He started walking very slowly off the path, using his blue vision to follow towards the source of the sadness.

In a small patch of tall grass, he found a boy, in tattered clothes crying and mumbling to himself.

"I see you. I can see that you are so sad," Theo said, as the boy started to loudly sob.

The boy looked up, startled, "Who are you? Are you going to take me away?" And Theo's vision changed to a purple-pink haze that showed the boy's fear growing.

"No, I don't want to take you away. I'm just a kid like you," said Theo. "My name is Theo. What's your name?"

"Herman," the boy said, giving a big sniff, "Herman Dolos, but no one has said my name since I was six."

Theo's mind was racing. Was this kid just lost? Or could it be that this kid is like him and afraid of the same people that he is? Theo stared at the kid and wondered what he dared to say next.

"Are you different just like me? No one has seen my real eyes since I was three." Theo said and pulled off one of his contact lenses to show his eye now glowing a yellow reflecting Herman's confusion.

Herman began explaining slowly, as if he hadn't spoken to anyone in a long time. "I jump from place to place, out of my control, sometimes where I want to be, sometimes I get stuck for days in the arctic or a desert. I just want to get back home, but I don't even know where I am and home is anymore."

Even though there was no proof, Theo could SEE that Herman was telling the truth.

To Theo this moment was a new beginning, meeting a kid who was different like him, opened up a work of possibilities. It felt hopeful. It felt like a world anew.

He didn't know what was going to come next for the two of them, but his world had changed.

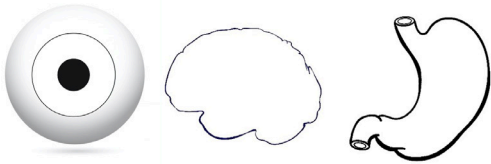
"Come on now," Theo said, "Let's try to find your home."

To be continued...

# ALIEN BREAKFAST: AN “OUT OF SPACE” RECIPE

Antonios (AKA AEK), Age 7.5

An alien's breakfast is very tasty and nutritious. It consists of eyeballs, brains and stomachs. It provides one with lots of power and energy to breathe in space and ride a spaceship.



...I asked an “out of space friend of mine” for the recipe...



...here you go...

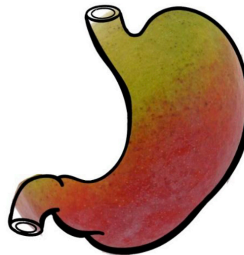
Eyeballs are cheeseballs with blueberries and drops of cherry sauce:



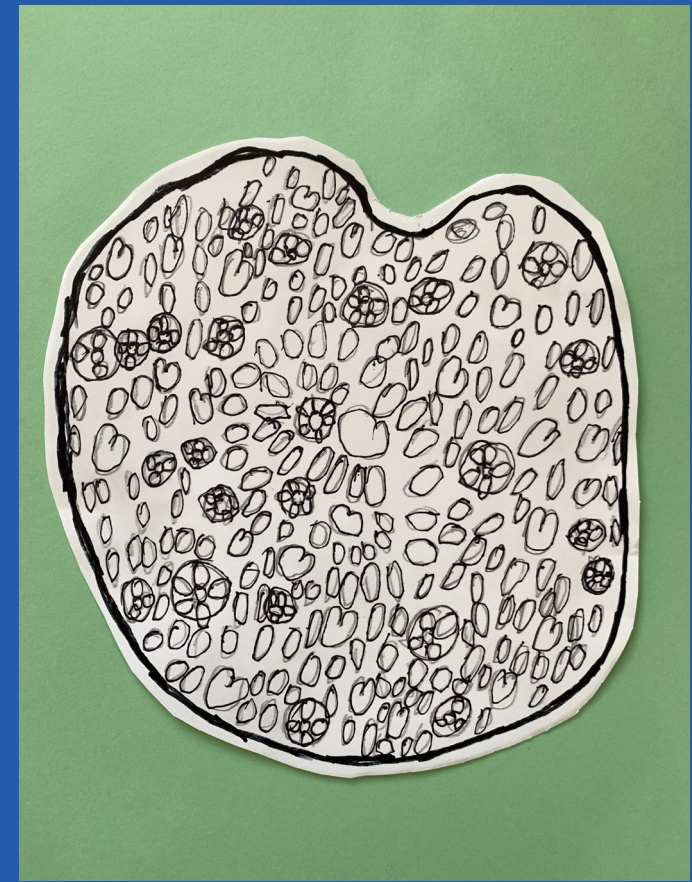
Brains are spaghetti with tomato sauce:



Stomachs are whole mangoes:



This is... out of this world! I tried it and must admit I am... over the moon!



## SHOWER OF HEARTS

Gwen, Age 7



## A WISH

*Pearl, Age 8*

A shadow glides through the night,  
Kissing the ghostly ground.  
It runs across the ocean,  
Then flies through the clouds.  
Oh, this shadow wishes to do these things,  
But all shadows have owners.  
It tugs and pulls,  
Then drops to the ground.  
It will never escape,  
Because all shadows have owners.  
Its adventures are a wish.



## MASK OF THE WORLD

*Evie, Age 5*



## IN THE JUNGLE

*Jojo, Age 6*





## FIRE

*Sophia, Age 13*



## THE PEACOCK

*Julia, Age 10*



# A WORLD ANEW

Lisa, Age 13

What if we didn't see color, as if looking at the world through an old movie? Would it affect fashion, science, and storytelling? Our eyes don't use red, green, and blue to see anymore. We could only make out shades of grays. Like this flower I drew, it wouldn't be the same as seeing it in its full yellow state. Flowing in the wind as it goes down the yellow to brown scale rapidly yet calmly. But we wouldn't know any better. We would have grown up with it. It would have been normal. We wouldn't have stories like Little



Red Riding Hood or Goldilocks and the 3 Bears without color. The red of Little Red Riding Hood's cape stands out in the dark thick forest letting the wolf know her presence. What would that story turn out as? The girl who ran into a wolf or not exist altogether. Clothing wouldn't show ranks by the velvet purple

or flowing blues in color but by the sheer amount of details on an outfit. In science we could not identify substances by color we would have to look at the makeup of it to identify different substances from each other. Would it make society advance slower or faster?



# CHASING A MELODY

Nathan, Age 14



# WW2

North, Age 11



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