



2023
VOICES/VOCES
ANTHOLOGY



Yakima
SCHOOL DISTRICT
DISTRITO ESCOLAR

The following pieces of writing represent the unique, compelling, and engaging Voices/Voces of Yakima School District students and staff.

Los siguientes escritos representan las Voices/Voces únicas, convincentes y atractivas de los estudiantes y el personal del Distrito Escolar de Yakima.

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2023 Voices/Voces

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2023 Voices/Voces

Narrative Writing/Escritura narrativa

Writing that conveys experience, either real or imagined, and provides glimpses into the writer's or character's life through the creation of vivid pictures. Narratives can take the form of personal narratives, creative fictional stories, memoirs, anecdotes, autobiographies, etc.

Escritura que transmite experiencias, ya sean reales o imaginarias, y que deja entrever la vida del escritor o del personaje a través de la creación de imágenes vívidas. Las narrativas pueden tomar la forma de narraciones personales, historias ficticias creativas, anécdotas, autobiografías, etc.

Edaly Itzayana Vargas

2nd grade, Barge-Lincoln Elementary School

Teacher: C. Manjarrez

El bosque de terror

Avia una vez una niña llamada Flor que le encantaba la naturaleza y el cielo y contaba cuento el cielo pero un día se quedó en el bosque sola y miro un pájaro que cantaba muy temeroso que incluso tenía garras muy filosas se paró en un árbol tumbando hojas y rasguñando con sus poderosas garras...

El pájaro temeroso le preguntó con una voz muy escalofriante “Una niña no debe estar tan profunda en el bosque....” La niña lo mira muy asombrada al mirar que ese pájaro negro grande con ojos color rojos le abla. Mira a su alrededor y tartamuda le pregunto ¿Cómo puede hablar? El pájaro hace un pillido muy fuerte que a la hermosa niña se le enchinaba la piel tapándo se los oídos gritando a la vez el pájaro aprovecha el momento se deja caer justo adelante de ella sacudiendo sus largo alas....

La niña se cae para atrás al mirar cierto acto el pájaro la miró fijamente mientras le hace la pregunta ¿Por ser tan valiente te voy a dar un deseo?

La niña muy curiosa lo mira y le pregunta que te hace sentir que quiero un deseo.... El pájaro la mira molesto mas lo toma como un insulto... al hacer otro ruido escalofriante la niña se tapa sus oídos y cierra sus ojos al abrir sus ojos mira que está rodeado de pájaros pero el pájaro era un hombre con pies de pájaro...

Le pregunta la niña ¿Eres un brujo? Entonces fuiste tú el que mató a mi padre. Le pregunta la niña con una voz exigiendo la verdad. El pájaro le contesta “pues claro pues se metió donde no debía.” ¿Quieres hacer lo mismo con mi madre?” le pregunta la niña con una voz fuerte y clara. Claro le contestó el pájaro son cazadores de brujos y no permitiré que nos maten.

Al escuchar las palabra del pájaro huye rápidamente la niña sin mirar atrás al mirara cierto acto el brujo se convierte en pájaro rápidamente y da la orden a los demás que persigan a la niña y vuelan atras de ella la persiguen a través de arbusto espinosos hasta acabar el bosque.

Al finalizar el bosque se encuentran con la sorpresa de la caza brujos al mirar eso la niña corre hacia ella abrazarla mientras los pájaros se convierten en hombres con pies de pájaros al mirar la mujer molesta y lista para pelear....

Cada uno de los brujos en mitad de hombres preparan sus armas e listas el igual a la mujer pues no se piensan dejar en eso la mujer les dice así pensaba encontrarte pues la última vez que nos vimos muy cobardemente le arrevatastes la vida a mi marido...

Empiezan a pelear mientras eso sucede un brujo agarra a la niña del cuello de la camisa y vuela con ella asia el oscuro bosque mientras ella le grita a su mamá por ayudó pero al no poder aser nada por estar luchando con los otros brujos al escuchar los gritos de la niña los demás caza brujos salen de sus casas al ver la mujer casi dándo se por vencida corren ayudar pues eran varios brujos logrando derrotarlos y salir rápidamente a la búsqueda de la niña logrando la libertad de la niña que se encontraba ya encerrada en una jaula al mirar eso el brujo que seguro derrotaron los demás brujos decide escapar y dejar toda atrás.

La niña felizmente corre asia su mamá tras ser liberada siendo esto un final feliz a este cuento

Grayson Baker

3rd grade, McClure Elementary School

Teacher: N. Trickey

Santa's Workshop

Two kids went to the North Pole and met an Ice dragon whose name was Icy. They were scared. But he was very nice and said, "Hop on and I'll take you to Santa's Workshop." It took a while but they made it to Santa's Workshop. When they arrived, they helped Santa wrap the presents. Icy hung out in Santa's Workshop too. Icy was left by himself. He decided to freeze some of the presents. When Santa found out he was very mad. Santa kicked Icy out of the workshop. The kids tried to explain to Santa it was an accident. Santa believed them and asked Icy to come back inside. From that moment on, the kids and Icy were nice and well behaved. Santa felt happy because Christmas was coming. The kids hoped they would receive the presents they wanted from Santa.

The End

Ashley Garcia

4th grade, Gilbert Elementary School

Teacher: T. Lynde

MY AMAZING DAY

It was a normal day. I was starving. It was almost 12:00pm. I was ready for lunch. All of a sudden, my long term sub Ms.Sandoval said, "We are having lunch in the classroom!" Ms.Sandoval never let us have lunch in the class. She opens the back classroom door, and to our surprise, Queen Bee enters the door. You might be wondering,"who is Queen Bee?" Why is she called Queen Bee? Queen Bee was my teacher up to 3rd grade. Students and staff know her as Queen Bee because she has a love and passion for bees. Her real name is Anita DeMonbrun.

Mrs. DeMonbrun had to leave before Christmas break because she got sick with ALS. When Mrs.DeMonbrun came through the door I rushed to hug her. I couldn't believe what I was seeing and started crying happy tears. She was also crying, trying to hug every student. I looked back and saw my classmates wiping back their tears. It was her tradition to bring us Happy Meals at the end of the year and she kept her promise. Everyone was happy to see her but they were also sad because they haven't seen her since the day before Christmas break. Before Queen Bee left there was a present for me! When I saw the present it made me feel happy, sad, and mixed emotions. But most important, it made me feel special. I felt special because I was the only student who received a present. When I opened my present there was a Queen Bee certificate, a picture of real bees in a frame, and a card that said Princess Bee in training. My heart was full of happiness because she thought of me. I was so grateful. I will keep this present forever. I gave my teacher another big hug. That's how I became "Princess Bee in training!"

A week later Mrs.DeMonbrun invited me to the Meadowbrook Family Fun Center. She invited three other friends and I because we had perfect attendance. She bought us ice cream at Dairy Queen and game cards. I had so much fun spending time with my favorite teacher. Mrs.DeMonbrun always made learning fun, and she taught me to never ever give up and never be afraid of anything. THIS IS BASED ON A TRUE STORY OF HOW I HAD THE BEST DAY OF THIRD GRADE YEAR.

Harper Pualani

5th grade, Gilbert Elementary School

Teacher: K. Clift

Paris

I woke up and let go of Melody as I checked what time it was. It was 5:09. "Ughhhh. I only have 2 hours till school," I groaned as I got up and slid my feet into my fluffy slippers. Melody freaked out, as usual, so I picked her up and carried her to the living room. I set her down in her dog bed and went to the kitchen to make her food. I opened the fridge door and grabbed the container of Melody's food. I put it in her bowl and brought it to her bed. She ate it up as I walked to go take a shower. After my shower I got changed, made some toast and tea, gave Melody her treat, and headed to school. I go to Cornell University, which is quite a walk. After school I headed to the daycare for my job as an assistant teacher. I was usually the only assistant teacher at the daycare, but today there was someone else, a young man, who looked to be about my age. All the employees were talking about him. He was kind of good looking (i guess) but I didn't really see what they saw. He was good with kids, like really good. All the kids loved him and they actually calmed down so he could read a story for them. I had adapted the skill of calming down 3 year olds, but it took years. I heard that his name was Brian. I went to introduce myself because well, I'm not a monster. "Hey! I'm Adeline. Is this your first time working with kids?" I asked him. "Yeah it is. I just love the little monsters. Also, I'm Brian." "I know!" He gave me a weird look. Gosh, did I just say that out loud? That's so embarrassing!! But to my surprise, Brian started laughing! His smile and laugh were so contagious, I joined him in laughing. "Hey, can I have your phone number?" Brian asked. His face turned red as he waited for my response. "Sorry, that was weird- "" It's 509-000-1111." Brian looked baffled. Then he smiled and I swear I turned red. I finished up working and headed home. I opened the door and sprinted to the couch. Melody hopped on me and started licking my face. "Melody!" I giggled and started playing with her, when my phone pinged. It was Brian. Me and Brian talked constantly day in and day out until one day, Brian had some news. "Hey, can we call?" Brian texted. "Yeah sure, what's happening?" Brian didn't answer. I pet Melody for a few seconds and then Brian called. "Hey Adeline, I'm moving to Paris." Brian said. I didn't answer him. I couldn't believe it. Why would he leave when we have such a good thing going? I hung up. I wrapped my arms around Melody and sobbed. My phone rang and pinged for hours. I checked the texts but wouldn't respond to them. "Addy, it's not what I want." I understood Brian, 100%, and I was glad for him and his job offer, but I loved him. I texted him back eventually. "I understand where you are coming from I'll come visit you. :) "I fell asleep with Melody in my arms and woke up to no texts. I was relieved yet sad. I couldn't explain what I was feeling. I texted Brian again. "Hey, are we good? I didn't mean to hurt your feelings." I decided to do something productive so I went to get dressed for a run. I was about to make some tea when the doorbell rang. I opened the door and saw Brian. He started saying something but I wasn't listening. I jumped into his arms and wouldn't let go of him. I let go and looked into his eyes. "Brian, move, please. It's an amazing job and it would be great for you." "Are you sure?" "As sure as I'll ever be about anything." Me and Brian stood outside my apartment hugging for a few minutes. I invited him in and we talked about the move. "I love Paris so much. I can't wait to visit you." I said. "I don't think you should visit me." He said. "What do you mean?" I asked. Brian looked at me and got down on one knee. "Adeline, I can't imagine moving somewhere without you. You make me so happy. Will you marry me and move to Paris?" I started crying. "Yes! Yes, I'll marry you!"

Izavien Ortuno-Edwards

5th grade, Gilbert Elementary School

Teacher: K. Clift

Battle with the gods

Alexander and Xavier Treetrop have been summoned by the king. Curious, the thirteen and ten year old brothers walk into the palace and approach the throne. "Greetings Alexander and Xavier Treetrop. I have a very important quest for you." The god of war, Kratos and the god of lightning, Zeus have been put under a spell by a witch. The witch requested you, our highest-ranking kid wizards. She will leave our kingdom alone if you defeat these gods in 14 days. Follow this map and a wizard will teach you necessary spells to defeat the gods. You have an hour to prepare."

The boys prepared, said their goodbyes and went to the gates. "So, you ready bro?" Alex says. "Yeah." "According to the map the wizard is outside the gates." They walked a mile and greeted the wizard. "Hello young fellows, my name is Dashid the wizard and you are going to learn two charms. The first one is Aquapello, the water charm that can be used against Zeus's lightning. Whenever he fires lightning toward you, you can shoot the magic water at him and he will shock himself, lifting this spell. The second charm is Protectado. This can be used against Kratos' axe. It will launch back at him and charge with magic thunder to knock him out. When he wakes up the spell will be lifted. Follow the instructions on the map. The first god you fight is Kratos." "Ok!"

The brothers practice the spells on the way there and they both eventually nail it, and then they get to Kratos' Palace [DUN-DUN-DUUUUN!] Hesitantly, they enter. "Who dares challenge me!", Kratos gruffly. Kratos jumps from his throne, axe in hand. "Whoa, can we talk about this?" Alexander nervously. Kratos, sarcastically, "OK! Just kidding, do you think the legendary god of war Kratos will bow to a tall wizard and a short wizard!" Xavier yells, "Did you just call me short?" This is when they are in trouble. Xavier fires Protectado at Kratos who dodges and throws his axe at them. "REALLY XAVIER!" yells Alexander.

"SORRY, you know I don't like being called short." "I know buddy but. .. Kratos interrupts, "Now are you guys having a sentimental moment in the house of Kratos?" "More battling, less talking!" Kratos throws the axe again and destroys the pillar and they have to run to one of the last 3 pillars. "We have to time it right," Alex says. Conveniently, Kratos throws his axe and Alex jumps out in front. "PROTECTADO!" "NO!" Xavier yells. There's a really bright light all over the room blinding everyone. Minutes later they hear Kratos saying "What happened?" Alex explains to Kratos that he had been under a spell. They part ways.

"You ready to fight Zeus?" Xavier asks. "Really Xavier? I need to heal, the explosion hurt me. Let's camp here." The next day they travel many miles finally reaching Zeus' Palace. "What is with gods and Palaces?" asks Xavier. "I don't know." Yet again the brothers open Palace doors. Zeus is waiting. "Hello, the witch warned me about you. You think you can defeat me?" Zeus throws his lightning bolt. "Duck!" yells Alex. They fire Aquapello but it misses. Xavier plans, "Alex, I'm going to run up that staircase and when the bolt comes back, I'm going to jump off and fire Aquapello so I can shock Zeus with his lightning bolt. Before I hit the ground, fire a levitation spell at me. Climb halfway up the pillar when I yell 'now', OK?" "Got it." Xavier sneaks around Zeus, spots Zeus's bolt and jumps off. "NOW!" Alex climbs up the pillar, so he doesn't get shocked and Xavier yells "AQUAPELLO!" They see the magical water shoot towards Zeus and he gets knocked out. Alex casts "Levitado", catching Xavier before he meets his end.

"You good bro?" asks Xavier. "Yeah." They wait until Zeus wakes up to see if the spell worked. When Zeus wakes up he is cured from the spell. Alex explains once again what the witch had done. They part ways. The boys head to the kingdom, arriving at nighttime. At the palace the brothers get medals. "Luckily the witch kept her end of the deal," says the king. They have a feast with the king and their families. Whenever the village had a threat, the brothers handled it and for generations to come their kids and future descendants vanquished all threats to the kingdom.

The End

Natalie Solis-Torraco

6th grade, Franklin Middle School

Teacher: A. Parker

The Mystery Gift

There once was a girl named Lily. She had light brown hair. She had dark brown eyes and her hair was in pigtails. She had on a pink and blue dress. She had on her favorite pair of brown boots. She was kind of short but she didn't care. She was in the middle of skinny and fat.

She was on her way back from playing at the park with her friend Ava. As Lily said her goodbyes she saw a piece of paper on the slide. Being the curious little girl she was, she walked over to the slide and when no one was looking, she grabbed it. There was dirt and mud and sand on the envelope. "Probably from all those kids," she thought.

She ran home because her mom was making her favorite food for dinner, spaghetti. She might have been running too fast because just then, she tripped. When she got up she picked up the envelope and most of the dirtiness fell off. She saw it had her home address on it, "wow a real letter for me!" she was too excited! She neatly put it in her backpack.

She unlocked the door and threw her backpack on the couch and then speed-walked to her room. She flopped herself on her bed and put the flashlight on her phone to get a closer look at the envelope. It was her favorite color cotton candy pink and it had a heart sticker. "Well that's weird but at least it looks pretty," she thought. Just then her mom walked in, "honey how was your day at school?"

She quickly hid the envelope behind her back. "It was great mom," she replied.

"Good to hear, well wash up the foods ready," mom said

"Ok," she said. She ran to the bathroom. She gulped down her food as fast as she could so she could get a more better look at the envelope. When she got to her room, then she heard a Ding! Ding! Ding! It was Ava she wanted to hang out.

I said, "sure!"

I told my mom and then ran out the door. You see Ava is Lily's best friend. She has black hair, dark brown eyes, and a green t-shirt with short sleeves. She wears dark blue jeans and white shoes. Ava wanted to go to the mall and Lily agreed. They lived in a big city so it was a big mall. Lily told Ava about the money and Ava was excited because "... cool now we finally can get the phone!" Ava said.

Basically, everyone in Lily's school has a phone. "Ya ... but well I don't exactly know who sent me the money," Lily said.

"Well if it makes you feel better we can use half of the money to buy something we can enjoy and then donate the rest of the money to a charity," Ava said.

"I'll-I'll sleep on it but I'm not ready to spend it today," said Lily. As Lily went to bed she forgot to sleep on it.

In the morning at school Ava ran up to Lily. As she was breathing heavily she said, "Did you think about it yet?"

"Oh, I completely forgot. Give me until the end of school," Lily said.

"Ok, bye," Ava said.

Lily just could not pay attention in her classes she was too stressed out.

"5 more minutes till lunch students" Lily heard the teacher say. Lily could hear her heart she felt like it was going 1 thousand miles an hour. Ding!! Lily saw every kid zoom out of the class. When she was done with lunch she tried her best to avoid Ava outside every chance she got. After school, she knew she couldn't avoid Ava any longer because they walked home with each other.

"Sorry I couldn't find you at lunch," Ava said.

"Oh me either," said Lily.

"So have you decided?" Ava asked.

"Hold on give me a few minutes," Lily said. As she sat down on a nearby bench. "I think I got it. I do like the idea of donating because I feel bad for the people that don't have stuff. We have especially when they need it even more than us." Lily said. "And I'll decide what we do with the rest of the money after," Lily said.

"Sounds good," Ava said.

"We also have to decide what charity," Lily said.

"How about make-a-wish?" asked Ava.

"Ok sure sounds good," Lily said.

They went home got their bikes and rode to Make-A-Wish. They ran into the Make-A-Wish Building. "Umm hi, we would like to donate." the girls said.

"Ok how much," said the office lady.

"About half a thousand," said Ava.

"Ok, but are your parents ok with you donating that much?"

"Yes of course why wouldn't they," the girls said.

"Ok." the lady said, as the girls heard typing sounds. "You're all good. Thanks for your donation," said the lady.

"You're welcome and thank you. Bye have a nice day." The girls walked out. "Ok now what should we do with the rest?" asked Ava.

"How about we split the rest of the money in the middle so you can have some and I can have some," Lily said.

"Ok thanks, but you don't have to have some," Ava said.

"If you don't want it you can always give it away to somebody that you thinks need it more than you." Lily said.

"Ok I'll take it," Ava said. As the two girls pedaled back home on their bikes they shouted "by!" To each other. Lily got off her bike and ran up the porch.

"Mom mom mom I have great news," lily said.

"What lily?" the mom said.

"Crazy story you won't believe it."

"What is it? Something wrong? Did you get hurt at school do I need to call the school?" the mom said as she was reaching for the phone.

"Mom just put the phone down it s nothing bad I promise," Lily said. "Well a few days ago I got a package and there was some dirt on it I tripped and most of the stuff on it fell off. I didn't know who sent it exactly but it has my name and our address and you can't just put someone's exact name and address on an envelope on accident," Lily said. "I also donated half of the money to Make-A-Wish for kids so if it wasn't meant for us at least we paid the good deed forward. I also split the rest of the half with Ava. I hope that's ok, if not I can always ask politely for at least some back if you want," Lily said.

"No it's ok, you wanted your friend to have some too and that's ok," Lily's mom said. "What would you like to do with the money?" lily's mom asked.

"I think we should put it in my college funds or we could just save it for something in my future in general cuz I am happy and don't really need anything right now but if you or me desperately need something we can use it," Lily said, "and anyway if I become rich I would be a magnet for fake friends and Avas the only friend I need."

THE END
(or so I thought)

One month later the doorbell rang and Lily's mom ask if Lily could get the door. "Yes mom ill get the door," Lily said. Lily opened the door and gasped as she saw who it was! "Hey Lily I am back did you miss me?"

Zoey Fouts

6th grade, Wilson Middle School

Teacher: K. Madrinich

Ava The Water Fairy

Once upon a time there was a girl named Ava, she was 12 years old and so far has had a pretty rough life. Her parents were divorced and her mom was sick with the flu and seemed to always be in pain. Ava was trying her best to get through these tough times.

While she was walking to school one day she saw flyers saying, "Singing Contest on December 15, 2022 at The Met on 5241 51st ." Knowing that she was a FABULOUS singer She joined as fast as she could, for the prize was \$500,000.

Ava went to the audition on the 1st of December, and she got in! She was one of the 10 lucky people to be chosen. This gave her hope, hope that she would win, hope that she would make her mom proud. Ava sang the song "Titanium." She was so good and the judges were so surprised that when she was done singing they felt that they didn't need to see any more singers. They picked her for the grand prize of \$500,000.

When her mom heard about this she was so proud of her that they went to hawaii. While they were in Hawaii, Ava was in the pool playing with some friends she made, right as the water started to float. Ava and her friends were very surprised.

When Ava saw this she tried to get out of the water-less pool by the stairs but she noticed that the water was moving toward her. She thought that it was strange and her friends started to run to their apartment. She kept moving around trying to figure it out. Then it dawned on her. It was her. She was making the water move.

She was wondering how she was doing it, then she thought that maybe she was a fairy, witch, or a wizard. When she had the chance she went to her computer to research if she is a fairy. The creature that came up in her search was a FAIRY! She predicted that she was a fairy before the research. When she saw that she wondered if her prediction was true.

She went to the ocean and was waving her hands like what she thought would work and it worked. She was water bending. She was making waves and rip tides with her new powers.

When she was having fun playing with her new powers she somehow opened a portal to a new dimension. A dimension that she had never seen before. But somehow she knew deep down that if she went in the portal it would change her whole life.

She went into the portal and saw a whole different kind of world, nothing like her own world. It looked magical, colorful, beautiful, nurture like, and HUMONGOUS!

She started to walk through the portal until a human sized fairy flew right in front of her and said "Are you sure you are where you are meant to be?" Ava said "I don't know where I am, can you tell me?" The fairy said that she was in the fairy realm and flew off.

Ava was confused and started to walk around and get a visual of where she was. After a while, she was walking and she saw a lot of butterflies and fairies flying around. Then she wondered "Can I fly like the rest of them?"

But when she was walking she could not feel the ground. She looked down and saw that she was flying. Ava was about 10 feet off the ground. She thought that she would have wings to be able to fly. She looked back and saw that she had beautiful wings. They had many colors. Blues, oranges, greens, reds, yellows, purples and more. They were beautiful.

When she was admiring her wings she noticed that there were more blues than any other color. She thought of the time when she was at the ocean water bending and said "I bet the power you have is related to the color you get."

She started to fly around just to notice that a fairy had been hurt badly. So she started to fly as fast as she could. But just then she teleported right beneath her and caught her before she hit the ground.

After that, Ava started flying around looking at the beauty of the world until she saw two fairy's fighting. And as she was flying over to help, one of them had just torn the other's wings. So Ava flew over, didn't teleport this time and saved the fairy that was hurt. Ava went to go talk to the other fairy about what just happened.

When Ava was talking, the fairy interrupted her and said "She started it and I was finishing it." Ava knew that was not a good excuse but she just took it and went to help the other fairy. Ava apologized for the harm that was dealt to her wings.

She was flying when suddenly the Queen Fairy flew right in front of her and teleported Ava to the Queen's castle. The queen was thanking Ava for all of the good she has been doing. She asked her if she would like to be the new queen. The queen said "I'm getting too old to be Queen."

Ava was excited and said yes. The queen was also excited and then disappeared. Ava had no idea what to do so she sat on the throne and teleported her mom to her because she knew that her mother would be lonely. Then she did good deeds all around the world and made world peace.

Savannah Morgan

11th grade, A.C. Davis High School

Teacher: P. Santos

The Unknown Man

It was addressed to someone's name she hadn't heard in ... forever. She couldn't imagine that it was real. 'Could it be?' It was addressed to a Madelyn Balmer. Her name was Adalyn Windsor. That was what she has been called for the last 17 years of her life. She realized where she had seen the name before and instantly her face paled. When she was just a month and a half old, she was adopted by her mom and dad, Rebeka Windsor and Joel Windsor. She was the only person that knew other than her parents. Her younger siblings, the Windsor's biological kids, didn't even know. She and the Windsors had agreed many years ago to never talk about her old self. It was left behind the second she was adopted and for good reason.

The letter she now held in her hand had no addresses or any writing on it other than her name and a little cherry blossom tree drawn on the back. She opened it with shaky hands and read the letter inside with interest, wondering whom it came from and how they knew her real name. As she read the only sentence on the paper though, she regretted wanting to know, because all she wanted now was to throw the letter far far away and forget it. And that's exactly what she did. She even went so far as to burn it. The sentence written on it was as follows: *I know your story, and if you want it to stay between us, come find me.*

The next morning when she woke up, she found another note on her desk, addressed to *Madelyn Balmer* once again. She didn't know how to feel with the fact that it was on her desk in her room. She was wondering yet again who had sent, or more like dropped off the letter. She opened it, admiring the cherry blossom drawing on the back once again. The sentences read as follows: *Keep running little bird, but you and I both know that you are curious about who I am and how I know you. Come find me. Quickly.* She threw the letter in the trash can and walked out of her room, getting breakfast from the pantry. Still in her pajamas, she grabbed a bagel and some cream cheese. As soon as she popped the bagel into the toaster, she saw another note with the name *Madelyn Balmer* on it. It was peeking just out of the bottom of the toaster. She ripped it open, ignoring the cherry blossoms, reading the note. *I advise you to stop throwing my letters away and start hying to look for me. Also, did you really have to burn it?* She leaned against the counter analyzing the writing and paper. The paper looked homemade and the writing was typed on a typewriter. She was impressed by their dedication. Her bagel popped up, scaring her. She dropped the letter into the trash bin before making her bagel and going upstairs. She sat at her desk with her breakfast, propping her leg up in her seat. She then opened her computer and checked her college classes to see if she had any assignments due. She saw the essay that she had already written was finally open and submitted it. As she was clicking the submit button, she saw a new email pop up and quickly finished up what she was doing to go check it. She opened it and gulped when she saw what it said. It was titled *Madelyn Balmer* and only had one word on it. *Quickly.* She ate the rest of her bagel while moving the email to her trash and got ready to go to the mall with her best friend, Lillian Ortez.

She arrived at the mall just an hour later. She got out and looked around for Lillian. Without seeing her and it being too hot to just stand outside all day, she walked into the air conditioned mall and breathed in the smell of fresh baked pretzels and new clothes. Since Lillian wasn't there yet, she walked into the jewelry store and started looking at the rings. Looking at a gorgeous thin rose gold band with a small diamond in the middle, she called an assistant over to ask if she could try it on. The assistant looked at her in her blue jeans and cropped tank top. Her face held a look that screamed *disgust*. She eyed the red sunglasses sitting atop her head and proceeded to ask her, "Are you sure you have enough money for this one?" Adalyn just flashed her a perfectly

fake smile and said, "Yes, now if I could just try it on, that would be great. Thanks."

The woman rolled her eyes and scoffed under her breath while getting the ring from the glass case, handing it over to have her try it on. While she pushed the band onto her finger, the woman kept a close eye on her as if she was going to steal it or somehow break it. When it fit perfectly, Adalyn stated, "Won't you be a darling and clean that up; I'll take it. I'll also take this little bracelet. Thanks." She pointed to a tiny gold chain with small hearts on it. The lady eyed her and took them both to clean them up before stating, "Your total is \$307.64. If you don't have the funds for it we can put iron hold for-" "Here's my card," Adalyn stated while cutting her off. When the woman took it from her, she held a skeptical look that asked if she actually had the money. The card went through and she was handed her items and her card. She walked out wearing her new items with a bounce in her step before hearing the woman call her back to her. She rolled her eyes before turning around with a smile playing on her lips and asking in the sweetest voice she could muster, "Yes? Is there a problem with my card?" The woman, shaking her head, just handed her a letter telling her it was addressed to her and some other woman but since she was there, she could take it. She saw her name and *Madelyn Balmer* written underneath it. She saw the infamous cherry blossom tree on the back while opening it and reading slowly, *It is very rude of you to ignore me for so long. Don't make me show up in person and make you regret your decision to continue doing so. Why won't you come find me? Are you scared of something? I can assure you that I am not scary. Also, I'm sure you're wondering, I am a male. You've seen me before. Even talked to me. Hopefully that helps you in your soon-to-start search. Hurry. You have until the end of the month to find me before I release your secrets. Ta-ta.* She scanned it over once more before she heard her name being called by Lillian and rushed over to meet her while shoving the letter into her purse.

Once she was home, she read over the letter a few times before deciding how she wanted to contact him. She couldn't think of any other way, so she wrote out a letter in her neat little handwriting that slants off to the right before putting it into an envelope and addressing it to *The Unknown Man*. She left it on her desk and went to bed, hoping that somehow he would get it. The next morning, at 8:15, she woke up, slowly opening her eyes. She glanced around her room for any disturbances but only found her letter, now replaced by another, from *The Unknown Man*. He addressed a few things she had stated in her letter, such as where she begged him not to release her secret, and who he was. His letter read: *Now little blossom, we can't be asking questions like my name or who I am when you have only just begun to make contact with me and tried to reach out. You don't actually expect me to just tell you everything, do you? I also can't just 'leave you alone' as you don't want your secrets released. As to why I am doing this, lets just say that I've known about you for a very long time and I think that its about time we meet each other. Now, as I told you before, I won't release your secret until the end of the month if you can't find me. If you want your letters from now on, you'll have to find them yourself. Your first clue is to go to the stated address and ask for Maggie. Just Maggie. Tell her that The Unknown Man sent you, since you chose to call me that. 1673 North Nuster Way. The red brick building. I'm sure that you'll find it. -The Unknown Man*

2023 Voices/Voces

Poetry/Poesía

Writing that develops an idea in a fresh, original way, in a format that breaks from traditional prose through the use of line breaks, word placement, rhythm, rhyme, and/or other poetic elements.

Escritura que desarrolla una idea de una manera nueva y original, en un formato que rompe con la prosa tradicional por medio del uso de pausas, colocación de palabras, ritmo, rima u otros elementos poéticos.

Sianan Ketchum

4th grade, Gilbert Elementary

Teacher: K. Clift

I am from ...

I am from mom, dad, Maarea, Ainsley, my black lab Coco, my sculptures from relatives, and my bedroom posters.

I am from soccer goals, soccer balls, our front garden, and my rocks from national parks.

I am from racing bikes with my brother, sister, cousins, and friends at the Gilbert Park labyrinth.

I am from Baba, Pops and Grams, Gigi, Granny and Bompá, Grandpa Roger, Uncle Milt and Granny Franny

I am from "Believe in yourself and never give up."

I am from my mom's lasagna, mac and cheese, and Thanksgiving dinners.

I am from Easter at Uncle Jeff's, Christmas at Uncle Wes's house, Thanksgiving at my house, and Halloween at Granny and Bompá's house.

I am from national parks, Yellowstone, Grand Teton, and the Olympic National Park.

I am from the Ketcham house.

I am proud of who I am and where I am from.

I am Sianan Ketcham

Jesus Mendez

7th grade, Washington Middle School

Teacher: A. Sawyer

Scribbles

Life can sometimes be like a white paper

Every day feels the same, day after day, all the same

And it's up to me to make it feel different. I feel
like I've lived this life already.

And now I'm bored of this world. It's like I've seen everything,
now I feel nothing, just like a clear white paper.

It's my job to put scribbles on it.

Elise Emhoff

7th grade, Lewis & Clark Middle School

Teacher: M. Emhoff

DREAMING BIG

When I was little I had a Kite.
I loved it because the colors were so Bright.
My Father didn't think it was Right,
So he took it away with all his Might.
I cried. My brother tried to tell me it was Alright.

My Mother used to be Living.
She was never very Giving,
I can't believe she tried Forgiving.
All that pain I'm now Reliving.

She died last December.
They ask if I Remember,
How could I not? It's only September.

I wanted to join Choir,
But my Dad started a Fire.
It must have been his Desire,
Or a bad Wire.
Neither are enough to Inspire,
Because he will always be a Liar.

In school they say I won't Pass,
Because I talk with too much Sass,
They must think I'm looking for the greener Grass.
We used to have a Dog.
My brother said he was dumber than a Frog.
(He did look like a Log.)
But sadly we lost him in the Fog.

Once my Father saw a Rat,
So he borrowed our neighbors Cat.
My brother didn't know-he hit it with his Bat.
We left it dead on their welcome Mat.
And that's why we won't ever get a Cat.

My grandma is Dying.
I know she's Trying,
Pretending to be Smiling,
While we're all Crying.

Now my Dads in Jail.
Guess he left too much of a Trail,
He always did run like a Snail.

How can they make him do Time?
In that place of Grime?
Was it really such a Crime?
To try to get an extra Dime?

I don't get what's so Funny
About trying to get Money.
For us it's never been Sunny,
And it won't be till I'm somebody's Honey.

I try not to think about my Dad.
They say he's a little Mad.
He can be Bad, But I think he's mostly Sad.
He thinks I'll never be a Grad,
Because I can hardly Add.
He's never been a Lad.

In this crazy Land
Everything is Firsthand,
And mostly Unplanned.
I wish I could Understand.

I know I can get over this Trial,
If I just Smile,
And go the extra Mile.

I know I can Forget,
And not feel any Regret.

I hope that in the End,
There will be no money to Lend,
No goodbyes to Send,
No bones to Bend,
And no more scars to Mend.

Isabel Romba

7th grade, Wilson Middle School

Teacher: K. Madrinich

Waves

Life comes in waves.
Overwhelming, huge walls of water
That snuff out everything else.
As you keep swimming
you'll face even more of them
each one larger than the last.
All you can do
is keep swimming,
keep moving,
Keep forcing yourself forwards.
Your only motivation,
the hope that eventually you'll reach land.
So your journey persists
because of the light on the horizon.
And you start to notice
the once huge waves
gradually growing smaller.
Your journey becomes smoother.
The water calms,
The sky clears.
And there it is.
Land.
It whispers to you promises of comfort.
All you have to do is reach for it.
But then you look at the watery horizon
which could hold so much more.
The promised peace,
It was the only reason you kept moving
but now that it's here,
Was it the only reason?
You give shore a fleeting glance
and keep swimming
past comfort
into the waves.

James Todd

8th grade, Franklin Middle School

Teacher: E. Stoumbos

Phillis Wheatley (3)

Phillis Wheatley chained by color

Her words reach people like no other

In the darkness of night without any light

Listeners far and wide destroy this darkness of night

Light of creation goes through her veins

In heaven she will never feel pain

She will never die

Ellowyn Zeigler

8th grade, Wilson Middle School

Teacher: P. Joyner

The Wind

Proud stands the Sunflowers
So bright and tall.
Turned away the glower,
Staying up until fall.

Tall stands the pine,
all the prickley and tall.
Able to withstand the long winter time,
and a home to all.

Fragile is the grass,
it is loved all the same,
but breakable like glass.
The wind has came

The wind is strong and destroying
The Sunflower cries
The Pine is falling
but the grass thrives

The grass dances in the destruction
moved by the wind
fueled by the obstruction
calming to the mind

Madison Gregory

8th grade, Franklin Middle School

Teacher: E. Stoumbos

Symptoms

Why is it that whenever
I am around you,
I experience symptoms.
I feel a flutter in my stomach
As you walk by.
The temperature of my face
Begins to rise when
We go eye to eye.
I start to stumble
When I hear the name
I always seem to hear
That appears to me in
My dreams.
My heart rate starts
to increase as our shoulders
Brush when we walk
Side by side.
I tend to ask myself,
"Is this normal?"
"Am I coming down with
A cold or the flu?"
Then, when I ask a doctor,
The response is,
"You're not sick!
You're in love!"

Alan Gutierrez

11th Grade, A.C. Davis High School

Teacher: P. Santos

Life Itself

Music is life itself.
Smooth, soothing sounds.
The chronicle of all who create it.

Music is life itself.
Instruments convey different feelings,
The singing of the symphony of instruments,
Like a story being told.

Music is life itself
A fast, upbeat tune
Brings memories of youth and friends.
A slower song,
Is a reminder of love

Music is life itself.
The dynamics.
At times a roar,
At others a whisper.
Sound crashing on the audience
Like waves on the beach.

Music is life itself.

Phillip Roberts

Staff, Nob Hill Elementary

Water or Rock

On the inside

Amethyst and other lightcatching compounds,

A symphony of sparkly doodads, glittery whatnots,

And results of pressure. Years of it.

A conglomeration of sacred scraps made beautiful in the dark.

They own themselves for folds of what others would pay

To wear them.

Just like you: an alabaster bowl in the stone age

In a drought

Filled with water once sunbound on a comet

Carting dregs of dirt and nonsense

Now clear and cool here on earth in your hollow.

It can spill to rinse grime from fingers

Or to quench vertisol on the plains

Or to save the life of the thirsty moth

The price - like the mind - now stupid.

They always do that, the hecklers.

They don't know what entails the waiting,

What makes forests of seeds and kings of boys

And what makes life of a thousand deaths.

So they laugh and jeer, turning their toes in the dust

Uncomfortable, with ignorant downcast eyes,

Lest their own sorrows become the punchline.

In the end - water or rock - it's never chance that makes the thing

But makes it known to those who would value the clouds for rain

The dirt for gems,

Turning the pan a million times of mud

For one golden flake of light.

2023 Voices/Voces

Essay Writing/Ensayo

Writing that includes opinion or argument pieces and informative/explanatory pieces in which the writer offers unique insights into a topic.

Escritura que incluye piezas de opinión o argumento y piezas informativas/explicativas en las que el escritor ofrece puntos de vista singulares sobre un tema.

Elise Emhoff

7th grade, Lewis & Clark Middle School

Teacher: M. Emhoff

What I learned from Uganda

When people think of Africa, they usually imagine it as depressing: children starving and people living in the dirt, a poor economy with everyone trying to survive off nothing. And while there are many people in Africa that have to go through many challenges in their lives, there are also many people who have what they need and are happy. In the summer of 2021 I had the opportunity to journey to Africa. I was actually pretty surprised by what I saw and learned.

When I was in Uganda, I got to spend time at an orphanage in central Uganda in a town called Bukomaro. The orphanage is being built to hold around 140-200 orphans. There will be 14 houses where married couples will take care of 16-20 orphans and their own children if they have them. To build an orphanage this large, they need many workers. Each worker gets paid around 3-4 US Dollars a day. Their work days consist of making bricks from dawn until dusk. This really showed me something. These people, who barely make any money, are still happy. They are happy because they have a roof over their heads and they get fed two meals a day. This opportunity is so great that some of these workers have temporarily left their families because an opportunity like that does not come around very often.

When we were staying at the orphanage, there were these two young Muslim kids who sold us fruit. There were around six kids in their family. Only the older half of the kids spoke English because they had learned it in school. They invited us to their house one day and they led us there. The walk to their home took about half an hour and they led us the whole way. Their mom made us food and we spent about two hours sitting in this small hut on mats on the ground talking with them. They made a huge meal that was really good. It was really cool to try a local dish from around that area. Their family was all there except for their dad so we got to meet their whole family. It was really fun, not just because we got to try a new dish, but it was fun to just interact with someone of a different culture and to learn what their life was like. It was amazing. One of the younger girls who was maybe six or seven years old was playing with a plastic baby doll that was missing an arm and a leg. She played with it and took care of it like it was the best toy in the world. While walking to their home, we saw some kids at a water pump filling up water jugs half the size of them and carrying them along the road. This made me see that we take so much for granted that we have. Being able to drive is such a privilege that we sometimes do not realize. These people walk everywhere they want to go or sometimes ride bikes or motorcycles. My sister and I had been given a card game and some crayons on the flight to Uganda so we shared them with the 12 year old girl and the 10 year old boy from this family when they came to the orphanage one day. When we were playing games with them, they were so nice and sweet. We did not really know each other's languages, but they spoke just enough English that we could play the matching card game together. They loved the game and we did not need it, so we gave it to them. It seemed like they were really happy. We also taught them how to make banana bread which they loved.

Another example of people in Uganda being grateful for what they have was a group of kids I saw while driving out to the orphanage. I saw this group on the side of the road in a small hut all sitting on the ground. They were playing with an old plastic water bottle and sticks. They treated these things like you might see little girls playing with expensive dolls. They were sitting there smiling and laughing. This was quite eye opening. We care about our possessions so much that we do not even realize that items do not really matter. These kids thought that they were just playing with their normal toys, while you would have thought of this as garbage. We have so much in our houses and complain about putting stuff away that sometimes I feel as though we get caught up

and forget that there are people in the world who have almost nothing, yet they are still so happy. This really goes along with how money cannot buy happiness. While there are wealthy people and wealthy areas in Uganda, the majority of the population does not have much money. But still these people can make their life meaningful. From what I could tell about a lot of the people in Uganda, the most important thing that they had in their life is their family.

My experiences from spending time in Uganda have changed me in many ways. I have realized that we take so much for granted. We have a world where we can get paid what seems like a small amount of money, but it is actually so much compared to what some people have. What we view as something that is junk or garbage is something that people could use. That what is sitting on our bookshelf is more than some people own. I felt really impacted by how happy the people in Uganda can be. They have nothing, yet they are still so happy. When we are disappointed or angry, we just have to remember one thing: that someone in the world has it harder than us, so make the best of what we have.

Rosendo Aguilar

11th grade, A.C. Davis High School

Teacher: D. Johnson

Justice for All?

It seems strange to think that Halloween should be more about witches than candy because that is how we have celebrated it for many years, we go from house to house dressed up in costumes to get candy but that is not how it used to be celebrated. What people used to do was light bonfires and dress up in costumes because they believed it would ward off spirits. To illustrate my point according to wikipedia.com justice is “the principle that people receive that which they deserve, with the interpretation of what then constitutes "deserving" being impacted upon by numerous fields, with many differing viewpoints and perspectives, including the concepts of moral correctness based on ethics, rationally, law, religion, equity and fairness”. In the play “The Crucible” there are strange applications of justice like being “stoned” and being hung from trees if accused of witchcraft. Furthermore it is generally believed that 110,000 people were tried for witchcraft and 40,000 - 60,000 were executed. Simply stated the laws weren't very just.

To begin with “Act I, it reminds us that the Witchcraft Act of 1604 was supposed to be "fair" but because of this law twenty people were put to death for the "crime" of witchcraft during the Salem witch trials. In modern times, the Judicial system is still not perfect, an example of this is African Americans being unfairly incarcerated. I think they are similar because African Americans are 5 times more likely to be incarcerated than a white American. Yet African Americans are only 13% of the U.S population and are incarcerated at a rate of 2,306 versus a white Americans at just 405 out of 100,000. To conclude act I the judicial system is still not perfect and can use some critiquing.

Moreover, "Act II" reminds us their method of using evidence was different from modern times. In modern times the types of evidence you need in a modern court are documents, photographs, videos, voice recordings, DNA testing. Here's the strange logic of the Crucible in proving a crime, the kind of evidence used in court in the 1600s were confession, testimony of two eyewitnesses to acts of witchcraft, or spectral evidence.

But that's not really their fault they didn't have DNA testing, voice recording, photographs or cameras in every corner like we do now. With this in mind you can't really blame them because they didn't have the technology or common sense and just believed what people told them.

Therefore in act III Danforth, Proctor, and Abigail demonstrate how easy it was to put blood on other peoples hands lying In modern times, other people who seem to get in the way of justice are the people you would least expect, law enforcement. I think they are similar because like Danforth, Proctor, and Abigail they lie and have been caught lying. In some instances, law enforcement may lie to give a ticket, for example there have been cases of law enforcement saying someone was not wearing their seatbelt even when they were when the officer gets to the window. All in all there are still examples of Danforth, Proctor, and Abigail in modern times.

On one hand The Crucible, although set in the 1600's has many lessons for us today about Justice. Particularly The Crucible shows that you shouldn't jump to conclusions without proper regard to evidence. To illustrate my point according to wikipedia.com justice is the principle that people receive that which they deserve, with the interpretation of what then constitutes “deserving” being impacted upon by numerous fields, with many differing viewpoints and perspectives, including the concepts of moral correctness based on ethics, rationally, law, religion, equity and fairness. In conclusion there are many lessons to be learned about justice in The Crucible.