An anthology of poetry and prose written by students and teachers at Shelburne Middle School

Inspired by the 25th annual Writer’s Eye literary competition presented by the University of Virginia Art Museum
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Letter to the World

Twisting – spinning – flowing.
My words spelled out in dance.
Each step – a letter,
each jump – an exclamation.

The feelings flow to my feet
as words take form.
The floor, my paper – my body, the pen
gliding across the page.

My words take meaning as
my expressions change.
And as music fills my soul,
my letter, unfolds.

I pirouette an O,
and balance a T.
The letter A tumbles
from arms raised high.

A period, comma, quotation
form in my head.
All while blistered feet
form a letter -

By: Virginia M. Kilbourne, 8th Grade

Inspired by Martha Graham: Letter to the World by Barbara Morgan
Grades 6-8 Poetry Third Place Winner, UVA Writer’s Eye 2011
Lost Forever
I’m in need of people hugs and a bunch of love,
But now all my loved ones are now above,
So I think you should really know,
That I can’t wait when it’s my time to go,
Because I’m a shadow of people who came to be,
A beautiful person that used to be me,
And as I travel through this cold dark dreary world,
I’ll always be known as that one lonely lost girl,
Now until forever.

By De’sha Fuller, 6th grade
Inspired by Studio, Lafayette Street, Guy Pène du Bois

Waiting
I really do hate waiting
I think that you do too,
I really do hate waiting especially when you have the flu,

wouldn’t you really hate to wait with a bunch of kids under age 8,
all they do is scream and cry, it really makes you want to die

when your face is green and the doctors mean,
please don't make me wait it's what I really do hate

By Addy Keats, 6th grade
Inspired by The Sitting Women by Henry Moore

The Bench
A shadow. An outline of what used to be. A promise. A promise that was broken against his will. Splash. A tear rolls down her cheek and on to what once was his pillow. A broken-heart. One that has been fixed and broken many times before. Unfortunately, it will never been mended to again.

She reads the letter over and over again, but the words don’t change. “Why? Why did you leave me here alone?” he cries out, hoping for an answer. She receives none.

The bench, the one they meet on, once full of life and happiness, is now full of sorrow and grief.

She still pretends he is there. When dinner comes, the able is still set for two. She runs her hand over his side of their wrinkled, unmade bed.

You know that she still keeps his picture above the mantle. In that picture, he's sitting with her on the bench, a dazzling smile shining on her face. Now she sits on that very same bench with tears rolling down her face thinking of what has been, and what can never be.

By Natalie Becker, 6th grade
Inspired by Couple on a Bench by Isabel Bishop
“His Curse”

This man was given a power. Not a magical power. Not even a good power. He was cursed. He had the worst curse of all: the nightmarish curse of being an ugly freak. He didn’t deserve it, though. He was once a beautiful, kind, man. He thought everything in the world had a meaning. He respected everything and everything respected him.

One day, a cruel, powerful sun god only known as Apollo woke up to find that this man was loved more than him. He was furious! He thought for days about ways to get rid of him. Finally, it came to him. He decided to send a number of challenges after him. He sent trials of chivalry, sacrifice, and mercy. For the trial of chivalry, he would see if the man was willing to give his money away to others. For the trial of sacrifice, he would see if the man would voluntarily give up all his possessions. And for mercy, to spare a hideous, ugly, powerful monster that could destroy everyone. Apollo thought it would stagger the man, and make him kill himself due to the madness.

A week later, the result was not as he had hoped. The man had passed each trial and was still alive. Apollo’s rage grew even bigger! But, he decided to challenge him once more. He tested his knowledge. He had questions with answers only known by the gods! He knew that the man couldn’t pass, and the penalty for failing was death! The next day he found out that the man had passed! The rage that was inside him burned through him so much, he knew the man needed to pay!

From the heavens, he flew straight down to the man and said, “The only master of you is me!” He blasted the man with all his might and slowly watched him change. He grew shorter, his hair disappeared, he became slouched and fat, his feet were now webbed, and a big, long horn grew out of his head.” Now everyone can see you for what you really are, a small, fat, ugly, freak!” the god said.

He flew off back into the heavens, but before he did, he left a stone to remind everyone that he was the greatest, and reminded everyone what happened to the man could happen to them. Soon, the man was shunned from his village, for which he was never to return. And he didn’t.

By Alex Daughtrey, 6th Grade
Inspired by Power Figure by Songye Peoples

The Column’s Secrets

“De Giove Enel Tenpio In Roma”
A hidden message,
One in which, can open a door,
A door to all of Heaven’s power, ...
Or all of Hell’s wrath.
Nobody can decode The Column’s Secret, A lie or a truth, A way to win, or a way to lose, Nobody can know, except the creator of the code...

By Jacob Brogan, 7th Grade
Inspired by Decorated Capital and Base attributed to Master G.A. with the Caltrop
The Riot
The great disaster, before and after
One month before the people were poor
They had a Queen, rich and lean
They had a King with jewels and rings
They were greedy and rude
They had money and food

While the people were poor
The King gave them no more
The people wanted to be free
From the curse of the Queen

They did something some would regret
They did something they wanted to forget
For they took the Queen and King
And beheaded them, then started to sing

Some started to cry
Some would deny
That the Queen was dead
And without a head

They didn't know what
lay ahead
With the Queen and King that are now
dead

The village turned quiet
They had started a riot
Against the couple who lead
Now lying, dead

Then it went downhill
and with no avail,
Has the place ever been the same

By Jennifer Williams, 6th Grade
Inspired by Die Carmagnarde (Dance Around the Guillotine) by Käthe Kollwitz

Her Chair and Table

Annie was an affluent nine year old girl who was very orderly and independent. She lived in a very astronomical house with her mother and father. When it was supper time she always sat at a separate chair and table then her parents. She had loved her chair and table ever since she was a toddler learning to speak her very first words. The table and chair had so much detail; the chair had spindles with carvings of picturesque flowers such as Alstroemerias with there astounding peachy petals and luscious green stems and leaves. It had intricate wispy shapes along the elegant manchette and lovely details on its legs. As for the table it matched the chair so perfectly, with its astonishing antique pine luster. One day a fire loomed inside of Annie’s house. It was horrid, everything burned to a crisp. When everything cooled off Annie went into what used to be her luxurious home to see if anything had survived at her hopes. Lamentably, the only thing that she had yearned to be unscathed was a shade of black that you couldn’t have even imagined. Annie’s table and chair were collapsed on top of one another darkened almost as a place where nightmares lived. Annie would certainly never forget this one.

By MacKensie Bowles, 6th Grade
Inspired by Open Zag #2 by Louis Nevelson
Dark Eyes

The dark-eyed boy slowly opens the thick oak door, bright light refracting in a glorious prism upon his young face. He stumbles forward in wonder, feeling the numb sting of ice against the bare soles of his feet. His eyes, black as coal and framed with thick lashes, take in his gleaming surroundings: a meadow, frozen in breathtaking beauty. The crumpled petals of flowers laced with frost, their stems bending, shying away from the winter sun. Distant mountains boldly etched into the frigid horizon, their peaks brushing the curved shell of the sky.

And then the child’s eyes come to rest upon a huddled mass, shivering violently in the bitter cold. The boy hesitates, taking small child’s steps toward the strange creature. His ebony eyes look upon a broad neck, a wide frightened gaze, and hooves streaming with blood. The animal’s ears flick to and fro, his chest heaving in breathless exhaustion.

Then the boy, with eyes deep-set as a doe’s, gasps, his breathe a swirl of frosty air. For the sleek, dappled body of a warhorse lies before him, laden with blood-smeared jewels. Icicles cling to the poor animal’s tangled mane. The boy’s dark eyes curiously follow the trail of scarlet staining the pure snow, until it is swallowed by the mountains.

Then his face falls, innocent eyes gazing into the depths of the horse’s weary ones. A current of knowledge and understanding passes between child and beast. The horse sighs, and a beat of silence envelopes the child’s mind.

The horse whinnies a shrill warning.

The child cries out in fear, falling, falling, falling.

Snapping the crisp shell of untouched snow.

A harsh reality: the smooth release of a single arrow, slicing through the deep indigo sky. Penetrating human flesh, burrowing into sinew and muscle. The boy’s hands press into his heart, attempting to staunch the flow of dizzying red.

The dark eyes mold into an abyss of pain and sorrow, blinking furiously to witness swarms of enemy soldiers invading the beloved village. The child’s raw, unprotected ears hear the cries of triumph and violence in a rough foreign language. The child cringes at the screams of his people, frozen in a moment of absolute terror. Layers of horrid sound twist into lopsided melody, chromatic notes climbing through the chaos, reaching a feverish pitch.

The child’s numb fingers grope through the growing darkness, chaffing against the warhorse’s flank, finally brushing against the soft whiskers of his muzzle. A slow stream of moist breath tickles his palms; he would laugh if he were not so strangely empty…

Through the veil of pulsing pain, the child feels the creeping chill of death clutching at his frail body. He fights the blackness with every ounce of strength he possesses, the heavy weight of despair flowing through
“You must not forget,” the boy whispers, his trembling lips moving just barely. “The warmth… of spring.” Something flutters and vanishes in the dark eyes, leaving them fixed and icy. The warhorse paws weakly against the trampled snow, searching for strength. Fire dances, crackling against the cold horizon, an inferno consuming the small village.

Stillness settles over the dead meadow as the last remnants of winter light frame the soft silhouettes of the horse and child, lost souls of battle.

By Darby Lucius-Milliman, 8th Grade
Inspired by Horse, Chinese Tang Dynasty

**Rhetorical**
An ocean full of questions overwhelms my mind.
Will I make it?
Should I try to?
Am I running out of time?
My first and only sanctuary lays besieged with doubt.
Is it worth it?
Does it matter?
Can anyone hear me shout?
And yet the world spins on and on like nothing is the matter.

But these questions we keep asking fill our minds with endless chatter.

Why does she not love me?

By Emily Johnson, 6th Grade
Inspired by *Couple on a Park Bench* by Isabel Bishop
The Horse

An ancient horse lived in a big place called China Tower. He was the oldest and the strongest out of all. The people there liked him so much.

One day the king of China Tower wanted the horse to fight. The town didn't like that because he looked too old and wasn't trained for that. Some other people thought it was a good idea. They could own other land if this horse would fight and win. So the king took this horse and went out fighting. When he was put in the war they were winning every fight. The people loved him so much that they gave him a nickname. Old Strong Steel, they all respect him. When they won they would keep some people and make them saves.

One day he got sick and couldn't do anything. From the time he woke until he slept, he was sick to his stomach. Old Strong Steel was sick from something after the slaves fed him. The king cut off the slaves' heads. The people were very mad. Some were mad at the king and others were mad at the owner for letting him fight in the war.

The town put there money together and got a very good doctor. So did the king because he felt bad about what he did. The doctor's name was Dr. Lee. Dr. Lee, check the horse to see what was wrong with him. He saw that his throat looked swollen. So he checked in his throat and saw that his adenoids were swollen so he gave the owner some medicines. Dr. Lee told the man if saw anything that wasn't normal or if he got better let him know. Give him the medicines every day for two week.

At the end of the two weeks the doctor came. Dr. Lee saw that he had gotten better from the last time he saw him. The owner didn't let him go back out into the war until he had rest. The people built a statue of him and had models of him to represent his strongest and bravery. In China Tower they say a pledge popular horse ever. They made stores after this horse. On the totem poles this is horse is one of them.

The horse went out to the war again but this time he had armor and he wasn't fed by slaves. Some people didn't think that was a good idea. The owner feelingly let the horse go back in the war. Once again he they started to win again. People were so proud and surprise that the horse was winning after his sickness. They were fighting for more land because the families were getting more kids. The town had over one million people. People would move to these lands so they could live and start off new. They were thanking Old Strong Steel. The horse was fighting like no other. This was a very intelligent horse. People relied on him to win if he didn't they would be poor again, that's why people respect this horse like no other.

Old Strong Steel, the horse, was galloping through the forest and someone shot him. The people were so sad and Dr. Lee came and visited him again. The wound was not that deep because, the armor that the king gave him helped. The owner did not let the horse go back in the war. But they kept the land because the people didn't want to fight them no more. But the people that shot the horse rode back to their village and told the king.

That village went and was gonna attack the village so they would have more land. China Tower knew if they fought they would lose. So they hide in the forest and when they came they started to shoot the other village. They won with excitement.

This kingdom had a plan every time a village tries to take over. Even though the horse is hurt, the village won. The king was surprised that they won, so they had a feast.
Dr. Lee went and visits the horse again. So, Dr. Lee said no wonder his name is called Old Strong Steel because he is old and strong as steel. The doctor said that he was going to live longer, so the owner was surprised. Dr. Lee put medicine on the horse’s stomach to heal the wound. After few days Dr. Lee came back and visited. He saw that the wound was healing but slowly. This was normal because it isn’t fast active. The king gave the horse there ancient China Tower’s piece. The village signed their names on the piece. So the horse would remember them. The bad news was he might die because the wound was not healing. His body couldn’t take much more. So the village was ready for it. The owners cried every day because he was goanna mist him. People in the village felt sorry for the owner because this horse was the most famous in china history. Back then there weren’t much horse so a horse was a good resource to them. Out of all their horses Old Strong Steel was the strongest.

Dr. Lee went to visit the horse one more time before the horse past. He was sound to sleep, so the doctor stayed to Old Strong Steel woke up. He could tell that he wasn’t feeling good. He knew it wouldn’t belong to he would die. He told the owner that he was going to die this week. Tuesday night the horse was throwing up. Wednesday morning the horse was out cold. He died at 72 years old. A very old horse that was strong. His funeral was on Sunday; the village was crying and was said. The village will always remember him as a strong horse that was treated like a human.

By Ta’Corrious Strother, 6th grade
Inspired by Horse, Chinese Tang Dynasty

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**CLEAR-CUT CIVILIZATION**

Once levitating to heaven in ornate relief,
They’ve toppled like windfallen trees,
camouflaging a thriving past.
Former monuments to arrogant men,
They lay useless as fractured bones in mass graves.

Styrofoam and plastic writhe among twisted steel girders
Concealing layers of iron shackles and gilded crowns.
Symbols of wealth and strength no longer
Appease the self-indulgent, complacent gods.

Sunken Amphoras, Enclosed tombs, Faded Petroglyphs
Echo in secretive whispers the ebb and flow of civilization.
Who will pass on the skills to carve, weave, and paint?
Without Art, who will proclaim our existence?

Concrete-filled ears no longer respond to weeping.
Seared eyes are unable to recognize beauty.
Rancid mouths are incapable of speaking the truth.
Where is the Muse that can awaken us?

By Susan Gutshall, Art Teacher
Inspired by *Decorated Capital and Base, c. 1537* Engraving by Master G.A. with the Caltrop
Thoughts from the Heart

I sit here on 'our' bench staring throughout the valley. Well, I wouldn’t call it 'our' bench since 'we' is now just me. I still don’t see why it ended so fast, so soon.

"Why did this happen to me? Why would this happen? What did I ever do wrong?"

I ask myself these questions all the time, I guess things happen for a reason.

Everything happens for a reason, right?

There’s another question I can add to my already full list.

Sometimes I get this feeling where nobody cares anymore. Or did they ever care?

I guess if they did I wouldn’t be sitting here all lonely.

Why should I even live my life if nobody is ever going to care?

Why did God even create me if he knew something like this was going to happen to me?

‘Well everything happens for a reason’,

Says a little voice in my head.

I sometimes wonder if God is really this voice in my head.

I wonder why God is able to enter my head but can’t answer any of my questions.

Why can’t He at least give me a sign or hint to one of my questions.

‘Well everything happens for a reason’

There goes that voice again.

Maybe this is a sign for something, but I still don’t know what. Or maybe He just wants me to find the answers on my own.

I am still very confused with my thoughts.

Ever since the break-up, people around me have been saying that I haven’t been acting like myself.

This is probably an effect from the break-up.

If I wasn’t here this would probably never have happened.

That’s why I wonder why I should live if bad things, like this, are going to happen to me.

People say, “He was just a guy”, and, “You shouldn’t cry over stuff like this.”

Honestly he wasn’t just a guy.

He was my first love, my first true love.

People tell me, “You don’t know what love is,” or, “You’re too young to know what that means”. I do know what love is and I’m not too young to know what it means either.

I have a true love, well, had until it ended. It wasn’t even my fault let alone his.

I blame it on the people who revolved around us. Nobody wanted us to be together in the first place.

I couldn’t listen to those people though.

There was just something about him that made me think, “I’m in love”.

Now I’m sitting here, alone, on ‘our’ bench.

Maybe I should stop calling it ‘our’ bench. I can’t though.

There were too many memories here that I can’t get rid of.

I can’t even stop thinking about them, about us.

I just wish he would come back to me. He’s probably with another girl right now forgetting all about me, forgetting about our memories.

I just can’t stop thinking about him.

If only I call him my lover again. I still do in my mind.

I feel a light tap on my shoulder that startles me from my thoughts. I turn around and to my surprise he’s standing there, alone and staring down at me.

We both stare at each other wide-eyed in silence.

As I lift my body from the bench he stops me and holds me in his arms.

We stand there holding each other for what seems the longest time.

It’s a long, soothing hug I will probably never forget.

As he pulls away, he set me back down on the bench then takes a seat beside me.

We both sit there and stare throughout the valley, my hand in his.

Now I feel like this really is our bench.

By Erika Hernandez, 7th Grade

Inspired by Couple on a Park Bench by Isabel Bishop
The lady with the blonde hair

A small office, nearly bear,
Accompanied by the lady with the blonde hair

Unaccompanied sits the drawers, creaky and old,
Filled with nothing but spiders and mold

Still lies the office, nearly bear,
Accompanied by the lady with the blonde hair

Above the drawers sits the oceans and land,
Unspun, untouched by the lady’s hand

The office still sits, nearly bear,
Accompanied by the lady with the blonde hair

There’s a mirror laid out on the wall,
In it the rooms reveled to all

Alone sits the office nearly bear,
Accompanied by the lady with the blonde hair

Up on the wall is her dying mother,
Fear strikes the lady’s eyes for the fate of her brother

By Peter Tillen, 7th Grade
Inspired by Studio Lafette Street by Guy Pene du Bois

Secret door.

It has holes
But that’s alright.
It isn’t big
So stand on your knees.
It hasn’t got a lock
But it won’t open.
It has its share of secrets
So tell us yours.
We are safe
Behind our secret door.
There are cracks
But no one cares.
Know that we are safe
Behind our secret door.
It threatens,
And it growls,
But it will not expose us
For the cowards that we are.
It bangs,
Coming closer and closer.
You back a way.
But we are safe
Behind our secret door.
Turn a key,
Throw a switch.
We are in the dark
Behind our secret door.

By Maeve Edwards, 6th grade
Inspired by Open Zag #2 by Louis Nevelson
A long time ago lived a woman and her son in a very small apartment. “Hey Mom” said James excitedly.

“Hi James, I’d love to talk, but I have a lot of work to do. So if you could, please play over there with your toys or invite a friend over or something but please let me to my work. Thanks, I love you,” said Martha.

“But Mom, I need to ask you something,” exclaimed James. “Can we do something for my birthday tomorrow? I would like to do something, unlike all nine of my other birthdays.”

“Honey, I want to take you out to do stuff but right now I just don’t have the time and money, we are living paycheck to paycheck and we can’t afford everything you want. I’m sorry James,” she muttered, as if talking to the papers in front of her.

James walked to his room in silence. He closed his door as if trying not to make a sound. Meanwhile, Martha listens to the long slow silence and notices something, something that haunts her ears. “It’s quiet!” she exclaims. She soon had realized that James was quiet for the first time since the accident. She noticed how rude she was being to James and finds his room so she can apologize.

She knocks on his door but no one opens it so she puts her delicate, white hand on the doorknob and turns. The door swings open and a gust of wind blows her bright red hair back she notices through the strong wind and the “whooshing,” that James is not in there. His room is empty.

Martha starts to tear up and she begins to walk toward his window and closes it. She then walks to the master bedroom she pulls out the drawer is pulled ajar. She shuffles through it as she cries. She gasps for air as she cries harder and harder. She soon pulls a framed picture from the monstrous mess of a drawer. She stares at it for a few silent seconds. She flops down onto the bed her pale face lays there next to her fiery red locks. Her hands clenching her stomach and she grinds her teeth as the pain she feels gets worse. Tears run down the side of her freckled face, her cheeks grow red as well as her raw eyes.

Her small harmless eyebrows move upward to her tiny forehead. Her eyes roll into the darkness in her head. She lay there, still. Her motionless body rests on a soft quilt made from sheep’s wool that her deceased husband made for her.

The next day her motionless body jolts out of place. Martha soon realizes that the previous day wasn’t a dream but fact. She abruptly swings to her feet and slowly walks to James room as if she’s scared of something. Still gritting her teeth, she opens the door, only to find a room with the unwanted smell of loneliness. The small boy’s room never looked more grey even though the walls were bright blue. A desert could not have felt anymore empty than the room. Martha is soon overwhelmed with the emptiness so she walks to her room. She approaches the messy drawer and then she reaches into is, shuffling thing around again. She pulls it out. Martha proceeds to the kitchen and sits at the very same place that she last saw her son. Only to be watched over by a picture, a painting of sorrow and despair that Martha can deeply relate to. The sorrow filled painting is of mother Mary as her son Jesus is being taken away.

She picks the cold hard metal item in her hands, Heavier than she imagined. She placed it close to her memories. Silence then an ear piercing noise. The noise bottled around in the apartment as it grew quieter and quieter. Her soulless body lay there flat, no emotion. Hours later her son walks through the large wooden door. He skips to the kitchen for something to quench his thirsts. He approaches the refrigerator he notices that something is different. A new paint scheme is visible; he soon acknowledges the brains, and gore on the wall and ceiling.

James drops to the floor as he sees his mom on the table without life. He soon is brought to the memories of his father’s death. James was only six and he walked in on his dad committing suicide. A large blade pressed against the man’s neck as he pulls outward blood squirts and so do horror filled memories for James. The young boy takes the heavy loaded metal and points it at himself hoping it would erase his memories of his worst birthday.

And then all of the sudden his whole family is together...
Some people say the three of them haunt the large apartment complex on 3rd street. Some say that they live happily ever after, but only I know the truth and they are standing right next to you. James, still thirsty, Martha still having massive headaches and her husband with a stiff neck. All waiting for you to follow them in their footsteps so you can join their small but growing family.

By Kris Coogan, 8th Grade
Inspired by Studio, Lafayette Street by Guy Pène du Bois

The Bread Line
It was in the month of October 1929. I was just a young boy at that time.

My mom and dad had great jobs. My dad worked at a bakery which at the end of every week would bring fresh backed bread and my mom was a nurse. They didn’t make much but they did with what they had to make sure we had everything we needed.

When I got up one morning to go to school, my parents had not gone to work yet which made me very suspicious. But I didn’t ask why.

When I got home my mom and dad were talking about something but when I came in they stopped talking. When I saw their faces they looked nervous and worried. “What are you talking about” I asked. “Oh nothing to worry about” my mom said.

The next day my parents still didn’t go to work. I was going to ask why but I decided to wait awhile to ask. Another week past and I realized that my dad hadn’t been bringing home the fresh backed bread like he did every week. So I decided to talk to my mom and dad. “Why haven’t you been going to work” I asked suspiciously. “Your mother and I are taking a brake for awhile.” My dad said hesitating before he answered. “Oh” I said so I went on my way. Four months past and my parents still weren’t going to work and we had to start rationing food. Things were starting to get very strange. “Mom what’s going on” I asked. “What are you talking about” my mom said. “You haven’t been going to work and we don’t have any food”. “I think your father and I should talk to you”. We sat down at the table. “Everyone is going through a thing called the great depression” What’s that I asked? “I think it’s time me and your father talked to you. It’s when people lose their jobs and have no money”. “We are not the only ones going through it-- everybody is.” I was kind of shocked when my mom told me this. My dad just sat there at the table quietly. “So that’s why we don’t have very much food and you haven’t been going to work, and dad hasn’t been bringing home the fresh backed bread? It all makes sense now. “There is nothing you have to worry about” my dad said. “Everything is going to be ok”. I believed and trusted my parents.

Four months past and things weren’t going as bad as I thought they would. We still had plenty of food to eat. I was setting in my room doing homework one day. “Hey son, you want to go somewhere with me?” Sure I'll be right there. I didn’t know where my dad and I were going. When we got to the place it wasn’t in the best condition. The building was falling apart. Me and my dad got into this huge line that was filled with people. “What is this place dad?” “This is where I have been getting all the food we eat”. I stared silently at him. While I was standing there I thought that this line looked like a bread line because there were so many types of different people there. They were small, tall, and thin, round, black and white. It was amazing to see how many people were going through the same thing we were. Most all the people that were standing there were men.
started to water more and more. “NEXT”, the lady screamed. Then he got his food and sat down. It felt comfortable when we sat down in that warm building with food. It was like a dream come true. After that he went to the trash can to try to find a coat or something before he went to the next bread line. When he went to the last one there was soup, bread, and crackers. He got extra for his family so they could have the same thing he did. On his way home he saw this man with nice clothes and a nice hat. He wanted that hat and that coat but he didn’t want to kill him. He had to do what he had to do to survive. So he went up behind the man and knifed him in the back so he didn’t die, then he took his coat and his hat and went on.

When he got home to his little card board box right beside the surer he served his family with the food he had brought home from the bread line. They ate and did the same thing they did every day, sit there with no one to talk to only his family. At night they try to find some sticks to make a fire so they can have some warmth. Finally the day was over and everyone went to sleep.

When the man got up the next morning all of the rest of his family was sleep, so he got up, put his coat and on and went back to the bread line. Sweat poured down his face like he was a hog.

It’s 1929. The sky is dark and gloomy. The man and the woman wake up every morning and smell the sewer that they live beside. The wife is sick because she hasn’t had enough food to eat. They lost jobs, all the bank closed down, and there is nowhere to get money. They need money for food, clothes, and dwelling. Just a few years ago they lived comfortably. Now, their only hope for survival was the breadline. He rubbed his wife’s face as tears ran down his eyes. He wanted to provide his wife with whatever she wanted; but he couldn’t do that because he didn’t have any money at all-he had nothing. He slipped on a coat that he found in a dumpster and he was off to the bread line. Sweat poured down his face like he was a hog.

The Breadline

Waking up in four in the morning was hard for a unhealthy man with no clothes no money or anything. He lived on the side of the road near the surer. He had a family of four and he needed to go get some food for them. He went to a place called the bread line, where they served bread and soup. It was interminable waiting in line, but it worth it when you got the food. Every body had their head down because they didn’t have money at the time and they didn’t want anybody to look at them either. As he got closer, his mouth started to water more and more. “NEXT”, the lady screamed. Then he got his food and sat down. It felt comfortable when we sat down in that warm building with food. It was like a dream come true. After that he went to the trash can to try to find a coat or something before he went to the next bread line. When he went to the last one there was soup, bread, and crackers. He got extra for his family so they could have the same thing he did. On his way home he saw this man with nice clothes and a nice hat. He wanted that hat and that coat but he didn’t want to kill him. He had to do what he had to do to survive. So he went up behind the man and knifed him in the back so he didn’t die, then he took his coat and his hat and went on.

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A man walked in, got a tray and sat down at a crowded table. No one said anything. They were having soup, bread, crackers, and coffee or tea. The thin, watery soup was devoid of flavor. The bread was bread—tasted good with the small slab of butter that they provided. The crackers were stale, but it didn’t matter to him because anything was much better than nothing. Outside the mean coldness greeted him, but he absorbed the fresh air like a sponge. His belly, not even half full, he left in search of another breadline down town. This time he man stuffed the food from his tray into his pocket. His wife had to eat too, or her sickness would kill her, he thought.

On his way home he saw a rich business man who was apparently not from his parts. He was wearing a fur coat, dressy shoes, and a nice hat. The man knew that he needed some warmth for him and his wife—that they wouldn't last too long in their make-shift home—that the cardboard boxes wouldn't do for much longer. But how would he get those things? He looked around to see if anyone was watching, then quietly, but most determined, he snuck up behind the man and stabbed him in his arm with a broken piece of glass. The rich man fell to the ground, coins spilling from his pocket, blood everywhere. Without shame, the poor man took the coat, the shoes, the nice hat, and the coins. He knew that the unaffected rich man would be able to replace his possession. As soon as he got home he fed his wife with what he managed to escape with from the breadline. As she was eating, a small smile seemed to appear upon her face. This satisfied the man.

As time passed, things got better. No more cold, no more cardboards boxes, no more breadlines.

By Jaylen Reed, 6th Grade
Inspired by Bread Line—No One Has Starved by Reginald Marsh

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Ivy covered door
Door
Confusion
Where?
I must find this door
To conquer
My fears.
A key
Under the black
Ivy
That covers
From head to toe
I open,
Strange
Confusion is
In the air
A world of dark.
No confidence
Everyone
Hides in the
Shadows,
I walk slowly
Toward the hidden
Awkwardly,
Staring.
Staring at me
Everybody.
Me.
I am
The odd one out
I think.
I’m not sure of anything
When I’m here,
I’m lost.

By Sophie Kozlowski, 6th Grade
Inspired by Open Zag #2 by Louis Nevelson
RURAL PASO FINO

I quietly graze, tethered to a wooden stake,  
grateful for the broad leafed plantain trees that  
provide a fleeting escape from the oppressive heat.  
Dried rivulets of sweat form drizzled frosting on my  
scraggly coat.
Blazing Flamboyant trees and fiery poinsettias  
unashamedly divert attention from the pallid dust  
I inhale from ever-burning fields of cane and cooking fires.  
Curious tourists intrude noisily like flies upon my meager  
meal time.

Bulbous sacks of oranges and avocados are tied to the  
simple, bound-straw saddle girthed to my back.  
I dread that tomorrow may require a heavier load of rice and  
prickly pineapples.
A rusty bit and rope reins remind me of my station in life,  
as do snow-capped withers from the grinding weight.  
I silently endure my task in the sweltering sun,  
supported by unshod hooves as hard as iron.

Rest comes when my cumbersome burden is removed and  
I eagerly massage my back in the humid, black soil.  
I drink deeply from the rumbling stream with guarded steps,  
and browse on slashed vegetation left by ebony laborers.
Shelter is under an emerald canopy of dripping banana trees,  
where pelting rain threatens to drench my weary body.  
A hostile fence of barbed cactus prevents any thoughts of  
freedom.

I’m not a war steed or decorated parade stallion,  
nor a sleek show horse or King’s favored mount,  
but viewed as the lowly brush goats, beneath the prized  
fighting cocks.
Tortuous days are with brazen boys who whip me for speed  
while the crudely etched faces of rum soaked Viejos  
laugh at my expense as they lazily play dominos in the  
shade.
I prefer the gentle hands of women feeding me scraps from the  
cooking shed,  
while carefully picking burrs from my thick mane and tail.  
I stand patiently with their giggling children, who dart  
about like geckos.

Though rarely acknowledged,  
my hardy endurance reflects my noble lineage,  
my petite stature belies my strength.
I have the stamina of a mixed heritage, as do the Dominican  
people.
I’m descended from the sinewy, Spanish and African horses  
that arrived on this island with Columbus’ conquistadors.  
Surefooted and alert when climbing the steep trail,  
my floating gait has the comfortable, staccato rhythm  
of my ancestors.

On a cooler day, I will claim my just inheritance,  
Dancing the Merengue with brassy bravado  
As my flinty hooves echo down the narrow, mountain path,  
Free from the constraints of my saddle and service.

By Susan Gutshall, Art Teacher
Inspired by: HORSE, C.600-800 Chinese,  
Tang Dynasty, 618-907