

Creative Writing from the 8th Grade

Mary McLeod Bethune K-8 School

Cleveland Ohio 2023



Lake Erie Ink
A writing space for youth

Introduction and Acknowledgements

The work in this anthology was written by the students in Ms. Uter and Inzana's 8th grade ELA class during the 2022-2023 school year. During the year, the students wrote poems, stories, and essays, new chapters to the novel, *Summer of the Mariposas*, and a few comics.

Teaching artist, Cynthia Larsen, from Lake Erie Ink: a writing space for youth, spent one day a week at Mary McLeod Bethune, thanks to a Teach Arts Ohio Grant from the Ohio Arts Council.

Thank you to Ms. Uter and Ms. Inzana for hosting these writing workshops during their ELA classes. We wish them both a restful and wonderful summer!

We also wish all of the eighth-graders a safe and enjoyable summer and a fantastic start to high school!

We hope they continue to use their voices to express themselves, to work together to create art and writing, and to help change the world and make it a better place for everyone!

Cover design by Edda Mendes.



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Amariyia D.

Spring

Mostly gardening, my hands
black like i just dipped my palms
into black paint

Summer

The sun is outside
bees and grass and going out of town
to water parks, having fun

Fall

See leaves falling out
hearing kids and smelling food
sleeping in, playing with leaves

Winter

Watching snow fall hearing plow trucks
playing in snow, feeling cold air

Amauri T.

Spring

Smell of beautiful flowers flowing
Spring football bringing me joy and excitement
birthday and the pollen making me sick

Summer

Going to sleep late at night
ice cream cold drinks sweating bullets laughter
two months for relaxation... football season

Arin M.

Spring Haiku

Blue flowers in spring
I met the love of my life
I love when it rains

Library Love

One day I went to the library, and I saw this fine handsome dude and he was trying to talk to me, but I was scared so I ran home, and he followed me to my house and that's when we started talking and that's when we got together and that lasted forever.

Ghetto (a fictional letter about the Holocaust)

Dear Daddy,

I was in the ghetto, and I was getting treated wrong, and I had to sleep outside on the floor with no bed or no covers and no stuff and if I didn't go to work soon, they were going to beat me or kill me or hurt me so I went to work right soon and when I got home I had to clean up and I try to run away but it was too much people looking for me so I went back home and then the people came to my house and ask me where I was at and I told them I was at work and then they was like okay and when they all went to sleep I ran away to start a better new life.

Bryaun W.

Spring Haiku

In spring
Weeds, flowers, trees,
I run track

Summer Haiku

Riding my bike
Play football in the summer
It's too hot in here

Chaneva L.

Summer

Two men shooting at the party
We need to go
scared and anxious, what's happening?

Curtis T.

Spring

I like going outside
I like playing the game wit friends
I like eating food

DaKala S.

Spring Haiku

The rains coming down
Pretty birds flying around
Kids playing around

High School Haiku

Walking in the hall
Trying to get by faster
listening to friends

Bethune Haiku

Laughing on the bus
Skating rink in the distance
Falling on the floor

The Flightless Bird

Walking along the garden path
My eyes fall upon a bird,
A flightless bird.
The bird was laying on the ground
It was trying to fly,
Trying to reach its destination
Over the gate
I reach out to the bird, picking it up and it
flys
It's free, unlike me...
Watching the bird flying free wishing that it
was me.
In terezen it's gloomy and dark
People are starving, children and crying, and
there is no sign of hope.
As i watch the bird fly over the camp
wonder
What does the bird see?
Does it see all the children?
Does it see all the people that look
malnourished?
What does it hear?
Does it hear the bullets being shot?

A Friend to Defend Her

By Dakala S.

As I walked into the room, I heard a group of my classmates talking aloud in their seats. “I wonder what they're talking about.” I thought, but I ended up shrugging it off for a minute until I heard someone say my friend's name. Once I heard my friend's name, I went over there to see what they were saying. “G is so weird, and cringy,” said one of the girls. “She wears the same clothes every day too.” As I walked up to confront those girls about it, they kept talking about G.

“Why are you talking about my friend when she isn't even in the room?” I spoke in a strong tone.

“Because we can,” another girl said.

“Well why don't you say it to her face. How would you feel if we started talking about you when you're not in the room? Wouldn't you be mad or upset?” After I expressed my anger, I watched the girls' faces morph from a smiling happy face to a guilty unsure face. After staying to see if they had anything else to say, I walked back to my seat to calm down. As I sat back down my friend came into the classroom. Asking questions.

“What was that all about?” asked G.

“Nothing,” I said, not wanting to start any drama, and after that I never heard them talk about G. again.

I felt mad that they were talking about my friend. It was mean and uncalled for. This matters to me because if my friend had heard those girls talking about her, she would have been shattered. And I think stuff like this should not be happening at all. Bullying someone because of how they act or dress is very ill-mannered.

Something I can try to do to prevent bullying as a peer mediator is to make sure that I express the impact of bullying. I can do this by showing them videos about bullying and how it makes a person feel. When my friend was bullied she needed a friend that would defend her and a friend to talk to. I will always be that person for others.

Destiny P.

The Key to 9th Grade

As I wonder if my lock is going to unlatch
I watch as the clock is beginning to rest
I know my time is coming and it won't be long
My dreams of going here are bright and strong

This school gives me a thrill
It helps me remind
That I am going to be the best and shine
I am going here to heal and design

My key is descending and comprehending my mind
I might make it out if I just inclined
Where I want to go will help me unwind
If I try my best to make it, then I'll be just fine

My heart is in this place I won't deny
If I don't get in, I just might cry
I put in the work so I can beam with glow
I know I got this if only it shows

Suffer

Having to suffer and scared of being choked
Not being able to eat was just no joke
Missing my parents and being alone
I just want to leave how far can this go

Crying too loud I might get shown
Drowning in my tears not letting anyone know
Just wish I can sleep without leaving in fear
In this concentration camp with barely anything to wear

Dominic H.

The key to leaving me alone poem

The deep feeling of despair is an understatement
Somehow my thoughts still take up my mind
I try to get my thoughts together but it rumbles down

When I look in the mirror It gets blurry
Just the thought of seeing my face haunts me
It's so ugly.

I wonder would happiness ever stop by in my journey or even walk by
Sometimes I question myself and ask would I ever smile or even grin again?

People tell me I shouldn't blame others for my hurt
But who am I supposed to blame? Myself? I don't hurt me well at least not mentally

Holocaust Letter

May 3rd, 1941
Terezin Camp

Dear grandpa,

I miss you so much. I miss the way you comforted me when I got scared when I heard the loud gunshots. Or the stories you would tell me about my mom when I missed her. Grandpa, it has gotten so bad since they took you. We now just do not get killed with gas anymore. After we are dead, they burn our bodies and take our belongings. Even if we cry or refuse to go with them, they throw us into a wall so we can cooperate. Since I was a kid, I always wondered why they hated us so much that they wanted to see us dead. I have lost so much weight because they feed us little food. But I mean we are just going to die anyway, right? Auntie Mae and her seven kids have been killed. I watched it all happen, through a window! My heart sank badly. It is like I am getting hurt repeatedly. I just want this to be over with. I do not want to keep crying myself to sleep. They make me hate myself. They call me ugly and tell me I am a waste of life. I am still at the little houses they stored us in. They say Monday they are taking us to some place called a concentration camp. I have no idea what that is, I am freaking out. Because that is where they took you, I heard and never saw you again. So, grandpa if you are still here on this earth, in this life, please write back to me before it is too late.

Love, your granddaughter Esther always.

Eriana P.

Locked Away

Locked away from opportunities because of the color of my skin.

Being told to wait most of my life,

Hit, killed, arrested because of my skin color.

We can stop this.

All we need is a key to unlock the door to opportunity.

And this key could go a long way for my people.

It could possibly fix our broken system

Change several lives out there that are so damaged

just because of the way they look.

Coming together and raising our voices is that key.

Stopping the racist cops

stopping the racist quotes.

Just stopping racism in general.

That is the key.

And every single person on this earth has it.

You just have to find the right door to use it on.

And that door is sitting right there in front of you.

Let's reveal that key and unlock that locked door

that has been locked ever since god knows when.

And march down those roads with pride

proving those folks wrong.

We can show them that we shall not be tamed

by their wicked games.

Joining hands and shouting as loud as we can

"Let freedom Ring".

Everyone doing what they want to

wherever they want

whenever they want

Becoming that bright community we once wished for

Marriet Jane - 1958.

The Tank Top Revolution
A Play by Eriana P.

Characters:

Arianna, Ari, Mr. Jacob, Bryson, James, Principal Casey

Scene One: 8:00 am Tuesday at school

Arianna: Hi Ari!

Ari: Hi Arianna!

(Bell rings)

(Ari and Arianna walk to class.)

Scene Two: In Mr. Jacob's class

Mr. Jacob: So, as you know, you all had an essay last night on our previous lesson.

(As Mr. Jacob is speaking, he notices what Arianna is wearing. He starts to get mad and decides to call her out for it.)

Mr. Jacob: Arianna, please go to the office

Arianna: For??

Mr. Jacob: Your shirt is inappropriate

Arianna: How? Isn't Bryson wearing the same shirt? It's just a white tank top.

Mr. Jacob: It's not just a white tank top, it's a distraction and a violation of our dress code.

Arianna: Dress code?! Since when???

Mr. Jacob: Since the day that you arrived at my school now go!

Arianna: NO! Not until I get a proper answer!

Mr. Jacob: You know what I'm not going to argue with you. You're suspended for a week!

(Arianna gets her things and walks off stage, and a teardrop drips down from her face and onto the floor.)

Bryson: That was so uncool....

Ari: I know right! It's so unfair.

James: I wasn't distracted by her shirt-

Bryson: Neither was I!

Ari: We got to figure something out. We can't just let Arianna get embarrassed like that.

James: I'm down.

Bryson: Same here!

Scene Three: The Next day in Mr. Jacob's class

(Ari walks into Mr. Jacobs class wearing a white tank top and shorts along with everyone else.)

Mr. Jacob: Good morning class, I've graded some of your essays. Good work, everyone.

(Ari unbuttons her jean jacket and reveals her white tank top. Mr. Jacob notices and calls her out.)

Mr. Jacob: Ari... Do you want to end up like Arianna? SUSPENDED?

Ari: If that's what it takes to get justice for her. Then I will do it... With pleasure.

Mr. Jacob: Justice? What are you talking about

Ari: Well since you want to play so dumb, let me break it down for you. See yesterday you suspended Arianna without a proper reason. But you did say that she "violated the dress code" which all of us are just now hearing about. So, I did some digging and realized that your so-called "dress code" is over a DECADE old. And even though she violated the dress code, so did Bryson-- he wore the exact same shirt. So why didn't you suspend him too?

Mr. Jacob (claps slowly in sarcasm): Nice speech. Still isn't changing anything though. You're suspended!

Ari: Well, if you're going to suspend me, you got to suspend them too.

(Bryson, James, Alex and all the rest of the participants revealed their white tank tops and shorts.)

(The principal comes in.)

Principal Casey: WOAHH. Mr. Jacob! What is going on! And what are you all wearing!

Mr. Jacob: I am so sorry, Principal Casey. I was just about to write all of them up for suspension.

Principal Casey: For what??

Mr. Jacob: for violating the dress code

Principal Casey: The dress code that expired over a year ago?

Mr. Jacob: Wha- WHAT?!

Principal Casey: You're funny, Mr. Jacob. (laughs and walks away)

Mr. Jacob: EVERYONE IN YOUR SEATS!!

(Everyone sits down and Ari calls Arianna.)

Ari: Girl, guess what!

Arianna: What?

Ari: There isn't any more dress code!

Arianna: Whoo Hoo!

(They all celebrate after school and live happily ever after.)

Ge'Sean N.

Get Out Now Keys

So one day I woke up to being locked in a room with 4 other people. We don't remember nothing. We just woke up in this room-- also it had a lock.

So I started to ask where we were to the other people but they said they don't remember nothing.

I look around the room and there was stuff everywhere like a huge library of books was all over the place and I just knew we were supposed to get out of this room somehow.

Then we all saw a message pop up.

It said look in the books to find the key. We started looking in the books but there were so many books. We eventually got tired.

If we did not get out soon we would starve but as soon we thought we would starve to death, food started to drop down.

To be continued

Giovanni H.

Mary Bethune Haiku

Mrs. Uter yells loud

Mr. Hrabak loves his math

Mrs. Price likes to laugh

K3y

“Key. This is the only thing I was able to think of. Key. As I get my bearings I take a swift look around. My hands are partly covered in red. My formerly white t-shirt is now mostly red. As I finally look up I see that I am in a twisted hallway. But this is a different kind of twist. The kind of twist makes you wanna throw up but at the same time lay down. At the end of the twisted hallway is a door. The door is dirty and has scratch marks on it. I approach the door with the strange golden key in my. Walking down the hallway felt like my mind was being stretched and pulled like a silly puddy. A insert the key into the disgustingly shiny door handle. I turn the key and open the door and then....white, all I see is white. I look back and the door is gone but the key is still in my hand. Unable to let it go, I try to throw it with all of my might. But, each time I throw the key it appears right back in my hand. Suddenly the white room starts to vibrate. But, not just the room but me as well. My tongue goes numb, the vibrations of my body start to over take me as all I feel are tiny needles poking me over and over again. My vision starts to blur and fall to the ground. But right before I pass out I grip the key tightly. Bang!, a flash shines before and suddenly I appear in a suburban neighborhood with a single house in front of me with a locked door. I use the key once more to open the door and usually I’ve learned to expect something abnormal but this time the strange thing is that everything appears to be normal. But unsettling as I see my childhood home and everything in it.”

An Agent Of Change by Giovanni H.

“Check out Lil Bill,” they said, “If he was a rapper, he’d be called Lil darki.” Those were the words that they called me when I was younger.

It was my first day of 2nd grade. I didn’t really fit in, and I was barely myself. I didn’t know who I was. I felt like a stranger.

I think I was targeted because I was new or because of my skin. I fell into a deep state of something people call being self conscious. I started to doubt myself and believe everything they were saying. I went home crying that night. While I was dreaming I heard a voice, a strange and unfamiliar voice. The voice called itself encouragement. “You have the power, the ability to fight back” said the voice.

The next day I felt better but when I thought it was over it started right back up. This time, I started to see things differently and recognize the bullies’ flaws. I saw everything that could be made fun of, and I took advantage of that moment. I prepared to shoot an insult back, but then I realized—what makes me better than them if I become just like them? So instead, I just ignored them, and now I have bullet proof skin.

From this, I gained a confidence boost which acts as a type of shield, but no shield is indestructible, which I had to find out the hard way many times. Imagine your confidence as a wall, but stress as a drill. Every time I get over-stressed, I become vulnerable, so vulnerable that my body won’t even allow me to cry. I reject crying because I look at it as a weakness.

“Are you gay?” said my father. This was a second experience that challenged my shield. I told him what he wanted to hear and not how I really felt. Being asked that question, I felt the same as on my first day of second grade. Because of this second challenge, I’m now the most vulnerable person on the earth.

What will I do to change things? What will I do? I’m not sure if I can. Every time I try to seal the wall back up, someone just makes a bigger crack. There’ve been so many cracks that I’ve just stopped trying to seal them up. As a peer mediator, I am really an agent of change. We stop conflict before it actually happens. In the future, I will use my words against these types of acts of colorism and homophobia so people who are saying these types of words realize what they are doing.

Govani S.

Spring

Spring is like the ocean
My hair and clothes wet
rain is all around

Summer

The pool is full of people
Hot almost every day now
Summer is the hottest season

Fall

Feels like the best season
Fall is football season
Fall is a colorful season

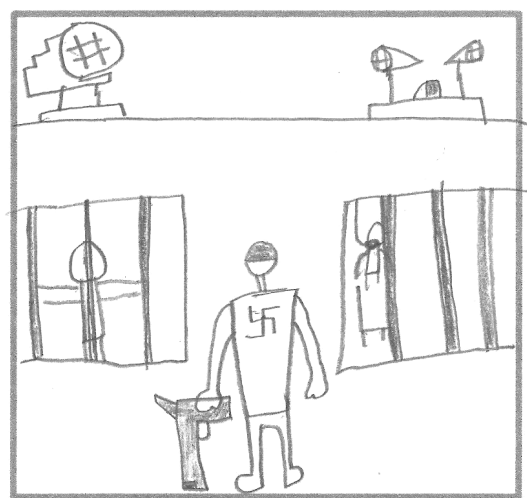
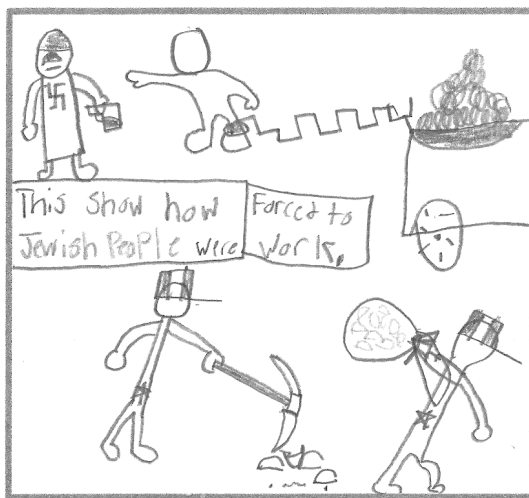
Winter

My birthday is in winter
There is lots of snow in winter
Winter has not many colors

Strength

I have many strengths and patience
I will keep going no matter what
I have lots of strength

Life in a World War Two Concentration Camp, Comic by Govani S.



Judith C.

How to Tell the Difference between True Friends and Fake Friends

Have you ever made an assumption about someone that wasn't true? I have and these people ended up sticking up for me and becoming my best friends. When I first met Mariah and Jalonie it was at the beginning of the school year. I immediately thought they were going to be just as mean as all the other kids who hung around Robert and his clique. But I soon realized that this was different. They were different. Aaiyana looked at me and I knew what she was thinking. "Hi. I'm Jalonie and this is Mariah" said the tall one. "Hi. I'm Judith and this is Aaiyana." I said. "How long have you been going here?" Jalonie asked. "I've been going here since first grade." I said. "This is my first year." Aaiyana. "Us too." said Mariah.

When they met the rest of the class, they started hanging out with Robert and his clique. "Didn't I guess it?" Aaiyana asked me during gym class. I say anything. I didn't want to judge them before getting to know them. I knew Robert was hurtful, but I knew it didn't mean that all the people who were friends with him were mean and hurtful too. I wanted to keep an open mind and not make assumptions about people I didn't even know. "I guess you thought you finally made some new friends, but even they don't want to hang out with you. I guess they could just tell that you two were losers. I bet they're only hanging out with the two of you because they feel bad for you." someone said. We looked up in time to see Robert walking away laughing. Jalonie and Mariah came up to us. "Why are you two sitting on the stage? Come play with us!" said Mariah. "We always sit here during gym class." I said. "Please come and play with us," said Jalone. "Fine." Aaiyana said as we got off the stage.

After this we all became friends and practically inseparable. One day, I pulled Aaiyana aside. "See Aaiyana, this is why we shouldn't make assumptions." I told her. "Don't act like you didn't think that too." She was right but I still kept an open mind. I was so happy. It felt like for once I finally belonged somewhere. Like I finally had real friends. I was still being bullied but I was cool with it. Being around them helped me ignore it. Later that week, Robert got a lot meaner and started being more consistent with his teasing and bullying. We were in class one afternoon, doing our work. They wrote a note saying that they had started to notice that when they were with Robert and the others, Aaiyana and I didn't come with them. I wrote back telling them about Robert and the bullying. They understood and wondered why we didn't tell them sooner. We explained to them that we didn't want them to stop being friends with people they liked because of us. "We get that but if they're being hurtful to you then we don't want to be friends with them." said Mariah. "You two are the nicest people in the whole class. They have no right to do this. We're not going to be friends anymore. Why didn't you tell us sooner?" We would have stopped talking to them a long time ago, "said Jalone. "You know you can tell us anything, right? We'll stick by you no matter what. We're your friends." These were the words my first true friends ever said to me. I had finally told them and a weight was lifted off my shoulders. I felt free even if it was just for a little while. They actually did stop being friends with him This drove me to the verge of tears. Nobody had ever done something like that for me or Aaiyana. For once we had true friends. It made me so happy and I finally felt accepted.

After this, I learned that you really can't judge someone you don't know because they might just end up becoming your best friends and sticking up for you. You should never make assumptions about someone you don't know because they might do something for you in the future that could really impact your life. These girls made such a difference in my life and made me realize that even though you are always going to have a lot of fake friends in life, you're going to have some real friends too. They made me realize that your real friends are the ones that stick by you no matter what. They taught me that you shouldn't watch as your friends get bullied, but that you should act.

Cinco Hermanas Adventure, A Summer of the Mariposas Story by Judith C. and Tavo H.

Once the sisters escape from Cecilia, they wander through the brush until they come into a town. They still had the little money they had and they were really hungry. They went to a restaurant and ate a delicious meal. They put what they didn't eat in boxes and left. As they were walking to the car, a man followed them.

"Odilia I think we are being followed," said Juanita.

Odilia looked behind them. She saw that a man was following them.

"Odilia, I'm scared," said Pita.

"Us too" said Delia and Velia in unison.

"Just keep walking and maybe he will go away," said Odilia.

Then they saw someone in the distance. It was a woman in all black. She was very beautiful with long black hair and light brown skin. They ran up to her and asked for help.

"Please help us! That man is following us! Please! We're scared!" said Pita

"Don't worry little girl. I'll handle him."

After that, she lured him into an alley. He went in with her but only she came back out.

"There, problem solved. Aren't you girls a little young to be traveling without an adult. If I wouldn't have been here to help, who knows what he would have done." the woman said.

"Thank you for your help. How can we repay you?" Odilia said

"There's no need. You asked and I did it." And with that she left.

"Who was she? How did she just disappear like that? What happened to that man?"

When they got back to the car, Odilia looked in her Book of Latin Monsters. She looked for a description of a mysterious woman dressed in black. She turned a page and found what she was looking for.

Odilia said "Guys, I think that woman was a monster. There is a description that matches exactly how she looked."

"Which monster? Most of the monsters try to hurt us, not help us." said Delia.

"Yea, what's the name of this monster?" Said Velia.

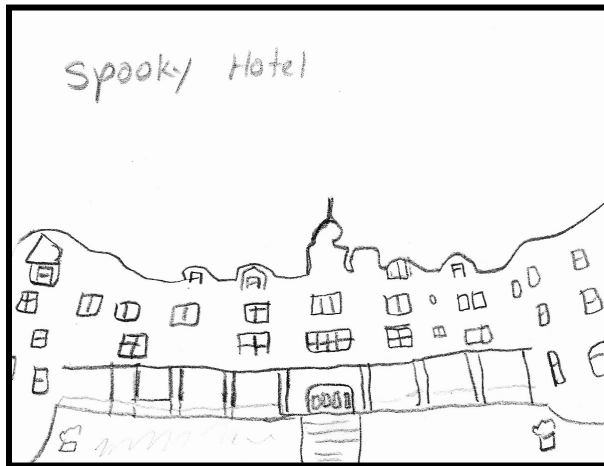
"Her name is La Vidita Negra also known as The Black Widow. It says she only harms drunk men."

"So she led the man away from us? That was nice of her. And also kind of creepy. Can we go now? I'm tired and want to go to bed." said Juanita.

"Yea me too. But I want to sleep in a real bed tonight. Can we go to a motel?" said Pita

"Sure Pita." said Odilia as she started the car.

They continued to the car. Soon they got so tired that they pulled into a motel for the night. They were all asleep when Odilia heard a scratching coming from the wall. She woke up and looked around. There was nothing there.



Odilia got frightened and hid under the covers. Velia woke up and asked what Odilia was doing.

Odilia said she heard scratches coming from the wall.

Velia said, "It probably was Juanita snoring."

Odilia said, "No, no, it came from the walls."

Then Velia said, "Just go back to sleep"

Odilia said, "Okay," in a frightened voice.

All of a sudden, twenty-five minutes later, Pita felt something tickling her feet. Pita started giggling. Pita said, "Velia, stop tickling my

feet."

Velia nodded and said, "That's not me."

Pita turned around and said, "So who is---?" Then she screamed very loudly as the monster went into the closet.

The sisters woke up and said, "What's wrong?"

Pita was still frightened.

"What was it?" said Juanita.

Pita said "I don't know, it was a little creature."

Odilia said "Pita what's wrong with your feet?"

Then all the girls looked down at her feet. For once in her life, Pita's toenails were well kept, clean, and cut.

"Who clipped her toenails?" said Delia.

"She never lets anyone clip her toenails," said Velia.

Odilia thought for a second. "What monster clips the toenail of little kids?" She thought out loud.

"Pita, did you see anything?" asked Juanita.

"I saw a little man. He had huge toenail clippers. He looked like a little leprechaun."

Odilia said "hmmmm"

Odilia said "El Duende!"

Delia said "Who is El Duende"

"It's a tiny creature that lives in your bedroom walls that clips little kid toenails." said Odilia.

Juanita said "That's creepy. Can we go now?"

"Don't go. I'm not finished yet."

"What was that?" asked Pita

"Who's there? Come out now!" Odilia ordered.

"If you insist."

Then the closet door opened. A little leprechaun stepped out with a giant pair of toenail clippers in his hands. He snapped the toenail clippers and the girls jumped back.

"Come on let's get out of here." said Odilia

"NO YOU ARE NOT LEAVING UNTIL I FINISH." said El Duende. "I still have to do Delia and Velia's toenails." Then he snapped the clippers. "I'll be back later when you girls have calmed down." Then he slipped in the closet and disappeared.

"Odilia, can you check the closet? I'm scared." said Pita.

"Maybe we were just imagining things," said Juanita.

"I know what I saw," said Delia.

"How else would Pita's toes be clean?" said Velia.

"Let's just go to sleep," said Odilia.

Then they all went to sleep. Later that night, Odilia felt someone tap her shoulder. When she opened her eyes she saw a little leprechaun standing in front of her with big toenail clippers.

"Hi!" said El Duende. "Please don't be scared or scream. I'm done with you and your sister's nails. I even painted them to say I'm sorry for scaring you and being rude."

"Oh, so you were just trying to be nice. I'm sorry for how we acted. Well, I'm going to wake them up and we'll be on our way to grandma's house. Bye El Duende."

With that El Duende went back into the closet and disappeared. Odilia woke up her sisters and they started back on the way to grandma's.

Letter to Papa (from a World War Two Concentration Camp)

November 1, 1942

Dear Papa,

It's colder today, summer is gone. Winter is coming which means no more playing in the sun. More people have arrived and even more have gone. Food is scarce and we're all hungry and scared. I've been here so long that I've gotten used to being hungry. I'm here alone now that Momma's been taken away. I don't remember her voice. I'm starting to not remember her face. I don't know what I'm going to do or what's going to happen. I hope I survive and get out of this alive. I'm in Terezin, but I'm worried they might send me to Auschwitz. I don't want to die. I mean I don't know where they sent Momma to or whether she's even alive. I made a few friends here so that's something. We're all the same age. Did I tell you I recently had a birthday? Yup, I'm 16 now, so I guess I'm not so little anymore. I know I haven't seen you since I was 8. It's been a long time; I mean I didn't really remember what you looked like until you sent me that picture with the last letter. I'll send you one back when I get a chance. One of the friends I have made here has a film camera, so I will ask her if I can use it. I miss you a lot. You're lucky you're not Jewish or raised as one anyway. I love you. Write back to me soon please. If I don't write back, you'll know what happened.

-Ahava

Loletha W.

Fictional Letter from Terezien Work Camp

Dear Mother,

Life in Terezien was very hard. Life here was the worst thing someone could ever experience, starving, freezing to death, bruising and even dying. We were forced to do things we didn't want to do. We had to eat leftovers that the soldiers left over and the soldiers left no food we wanted to eat. We were cooped up in tiny tents, cold, hungry and thirsty while others have special treatment such as eating whenever. Others even got to live in comfy cabins, warm, probably even had more covers than us, and I'm pretty sure they had beds. The floor was dirty, flies everywhere, families got split apart because of who they were and what they were mixed with.

They take people away and kill them as well. We sleep on wooden bunks which hurt our bodies. There are also pregnant people but they are very thin because they are starving. Kids who can't work most likely will be killed because they aren't useful and can't do much. If you are able to stay with your parents you are very lucky.

There are many people here that are suffering, including me. I never thought life here in Terezien would be this bad through all the suffering, starving, hurting, treated unkindly and used.

Mother, please bring me home.

Sincerely, Your Child

Michael M.

A letter from the concentration camp

Dear Mother

It's been weeks since I was sent to Terezin. It's cold and wet, and I'm starving. I miss your cooking, and I miss the garden we had. I miss being lazy and not doing chores. This place has nothing sweet like the home we had. This place is dirty and devoid of happiness. I've heard stories that people who leave this place get sent to death. Maybe that's why I haven't seen my sister in a while, I hope she's ok. I still have hope wishing I was here with you.

From your loving son
Abraham

The Cadeja Perro Negro

By Zaire, Michael, and Austin

The sisters were driving on the road hoping they could make it to El Sacrificio when suddenly the car broke down. They had just gone to the gas station, so they didn't know why. Pita started to complain.

"Odilia please go check the car, I'm scared!"

"Fine I'll go check it and stop complaining," said Odilia.

She went outside to check when suddenly the moonlit sky turned dark and cloudy. It became very foggy outside and felt like a ghost town. Juanita jumped out of the car to ask what was taking so long, she looked around and started to get anxious.

"What is going on?" said Juanita.

Then suddenly the quietest of night was stolen by the husky breathing that surrounded the air. It smelled like rotten flesh.

Pita peeked out of the window, "Odilia what is that noise and what's that smell."

"I don't know," Odilia said, pinching her nose as the toxic fumes entered her nostril. If it could not have gotten worse the sisters started to hear growling and sounds of bones clatter.

"Get back in the car!" Odilia said.

"Okay," said Juanita, confused and scared.

"Stay back!" Odilia yelled, scared out of her mind. She rushed to a nearby tree and grabbed a thick tree branch. She stood in the road with the tree branch ready to defend herself. Then the dogs began growling loudly and started walking out of the fog. It looked like they had red beaming eyes and sharp teeth that looked as if they could chop through Metal. While Odilia trembles with fear, she takes a swing at the dog missing her swing and loses her balance. She fell to the ground and lost her stick, she started to run towards the car hoping she could make it back to the car for safety. The dogs start to pursue Odilia, but she makes a narrow escape in the car. She jumps into the car scared out of her mind.

"I think I did it," said Velia

"Did what?" spoke Odilia

"I fixed the car, it was a broken wire, so I taped it back together," said Velia

"Really! That's an amazing, excellent job Velia."

"I know you are all happy, but can you please STEP ON THE GAS AND GO!" yelled Pita

"Fine, we can finally go now, but I don't think this is the end. We can't go back now so get ready...", said Odilia relieved.



Najah S.

Judgment day-

Waiting for the sound
Looking up into the sky
Trying to pass by

Day at the beach-

All the windows down
Stepping out on the sand
Cold feeling in hand

Football season-

Helmets on locked and tight
Cheering girls all in sight
Scoring left and right

Nevaeh L.

Spring

Spring is a puddle
Daisies make me feel happy
Rainbows make me feel excited

Niairria L.

Winter Haiku

I throw snowballs fast
I play in the snow at home
I love dyeing the snow

Summer Haiku

I love swimming outside
I have 2 hours left of swimming
I am very cold now

Fall Couplet

I jumped in the leaves
I helped my mom rake

Penina I.

The Key

One time in a little city there was a little girl called Isabella. She was 5 years old when they moved to America. Her mom was coming from Japan and her dad left them when she was only 9 months old.

Her mom had this one box that she did not allow Isabella to open until she turned 18, and Isabella was like what's in that box. She couldn't get it because her mom put it on the highest shelf ever. Even if you try to do it with a chair way too high.

Many years later Isabella was 16 years old. She couldn't wait to open that gift so when she came from school she went to her mom. Her mom said that box has something I need to tell you, but you have to wait for 2 years until you turn 18.

Two years later it was Isabella's birthday. She was so happy to open that secret box. She was so happy. it was gonna be something good, but it was not a good gift from her dad so her friends gave her gifts and now it was her mom's turn. Her mom was so sad she did not even want to give it to her, but she had to know she had a bad father. Finally her mom told her, you sure you wanna open it?

Isabella was like yeah I can't wait. When her mom gave her the key she opened it. She was like my dad is a criminal. Her dad stole from the bank so she ran into her room crying with mad tears. Her classmate ran out of the house and after 3 weeks she did not go to school because her friends will say her dad is a criminal. She could not believe that's what her dad does. Isabella said I need to go back to school.

She said what her dad did cannot make her not do her classwork so she went to school. All the kids were saying did you see the news? The police got your dad. He's in jail.

The girl ran back home to see the police at her house. She went to see that her mom was a criminal. She could not believe that her mom and dad were criminals years later. She had to go to her aunt's house. She didn't even want to go to school. She was mad and crying sad tears.

Years passed, and she got married at 23. She has 3 kids, 2 girls and 1 boy. She had never told her husband what happened with her dad and mom. She got a job and her life was good and did not want to think about her dad and mom. Then she took her family. The end

A Comic about Life in a Concentration Camp during WWII by Penina I.



Shamia L.

Bullies on the Bus

It was my 5th-grade year, I think in 2018. By the way, I have a lot of siblings and I used to ride the school bus to school. Well, it was Monday, and we were on the way to school. My brother was at the back of the bus laughing and giggling and messing with a boy. I really wasn't worried though. They were in 8th and 7th grade so yeah they were older. I mean I really couldn't do anything about it for real, but that same day they had jumped him but not on the bus.

Imma tell that later though but to be honest I kind of felt how he was feeling. I was honestly scared for him. I kind of wanted to cry, but I didn't because of who I was.

Who I am today, I probably could have helped him. To this day they haven't changed, they still bully and pick on people.

The way I felt that day was confusing and I kind of felt scared in a way. I mean I know that my brothers are capable of hurting people in this way. That's why I don't put them in my situations, but I felt like they were doing a little too much. I kind of was feeling scared for him because they had jumped him over petty stuff. If I was as bold as I was today, I could have prevented it back then.

The way I could have changed that was to step up for him and try to calm down my brothers to not do that, but also, to be honest, they wouldn't have listened anyways. They told me why they were jumping him, but I personally felt it was irrelevant. The way I am now if I was that way back then I wouldn't have let that happen because I don't tolerate bullying. I don't like seeing it because in my heart it hurts to be shamed or made fun of by others.

My Favorite Time at Bethune, A Haiku

We went on a trip
The hall of fame was fun
I like football now

My High School Year, A Haiku

I'm gonna pass 9th
I'm going to study really hard
I'm gonna follow rules

Shaniya L.

Letter from a concentration camp.

Dear mom,

I've been okay. I'm just hungry. I haven't ate any real food. I've been cold. I have to sleep on the dirty hard floor. I hate it here. I miss being back home. I hate hearing kids crying. I feel so bad. Why do we have to live like this? i'm so scared for my life. My life has been so draining since I been here. This is really a death camp. There's so many of us in here. They're starving us. I'm so dirty. I hate not being able to wash up. They beat us if we do not work fast enough. It hurts really bad. I really hate it at this camp. I hope I make it out of here.

Spring Haiku

Listening to rain
I like watering my plants
Running in the grass

Summer Haiku

Feeling the hot sun
Smelling the pretty flowers
The bumble bees fly

Tavio H.

Hard Ways

Once a long time ago in Florida I was a cool kid had a lot of friends liked basketball was almost going to graduate from high school get a scholarship for playing basketball until one I got blame for something I didn't do mess my whole career then I see myself in jail see older man bothering me I feel so frightened I hear police officers screaming at prisoners. The only way I can come free if the guards let me out is if I just serve the time in jail. The thing that gives me hope is my mom checking on me everyday calling me. Ever since I've been in here I've been dreaming of getting out of this cell.

(For more of Tavio's work, check out the Summer of the Mariposas story he wrote with Judith.)

Theonte M.

The Key to Everything

I had a locked door in my house. I never went in because I was only listening to my mom. I was not allowed to go in there because she did not want me to see many things. One day on my way from school I found a key. The key that I found was magical. I will bring it to my house and open that locked door. I opened it and there was a lot of money. My mom did not tell me we had a lot of money. I closed the door back and locked it so she would not know.

Another day I went to my friend's house. He had a locked door that he did not tell me about. He told me not to go in there because he wanted me to give something to him on my birthday. What he did not know was that I had a magical key. I opened the door when he went downstairs. He had a lot of shoes and money. He was going to get me some shoes and money for my birthday. I locked the door back so that he could not know that I was in the closet looking.

My mom and Govani told me someone was in their closets. I told them that it was not me. I lied so that I would not get beat up by my friend and punched by my mom. I had to tell the truth. I told them that it was me because I wanted to see what was in there because they never told me what was in there. I told them that I looked, and I found a magical key that opens anything. Since I had gotten in trouble with the key, I will have to hide it forever. I hid it in a cave where no one can go. I hid it in the woods where a bunch of trees are. I feel so sad because the key can open anything.

A letter from a war camp

Dear Mom,

I am writing this letter from a war camp. It is dangerous and I want to come back home and play my game. I can't stop thinking of everything that is going on here.

Travelle B.

My favorite Bethune Memory

On a sunny day
is hot wind brushing against
Me and my best friend

High School Future

Studying at night
Walking home with achievements
Spending time with friends.

Favorite Moment

My birthday last year
Was the best because I had
My friends celebrated.

A Story in Letters about Life in a Concentration Camp

Hi mom Hi dad,
I am sorry and I miss you two. I know I am in a camp because of the tents and fence. I am sorry about how things ended before we were moved. Lulu (her best friend) was taken somewhere and shipped off. I hope she comes back. We are usually working in the fields. It gets cold at night with no blankets.
Love,
Lucia

Winter 1942

Hi Lucia,
I am so glad you are alive. I am sure Lulu will return. I really hope that you are still standing strong. I want you to know I will always be there in heart and spirit. I really miss you all now that we are in a ghetto because of the buildings in poor condition and the fences. We are moving to a new camp soon. That camp is the one you are in. See you soon. We both love you, Lucia.

Love,
Mom

Zaire F.

Haiku

Spring Haiku

The wet rainy slippery grass.
The smell of honey in the air
Flowers blossom in the air

Summer Haiku

Pollen fills the air
Flowers blossoms beautifully
The smell of honey

Life in the Concentration Camps

December 18, 1941

Esterwegen concentration camp

Dear Mother,

It has been two months since I was taken into a concentration camp called Esterwegen concentration camp by Nazi police. I miss you so much, this place is the worst place I ever even stepped foot in. I hate every second. The day I came to this camp I knew I was done. The camp looked run down, it had tall barbed wire fences and tall watch towers. It was raining, the sky was cloudy and grey while the rain was drowning the clothing these Nazis had given me. The Nazi police yelled at me, threw me around and pushed me as they walked me into the camp. When I walked in, I saw large groups of men working on the fields with long cold metal shovels. Their looks horrified me, they looked so skinny you would have thought they weighed only 60-90 pounds, you could see most of their bones. Their faces looked so tired and emotionless, the look in their eyes had no emotions to it. No anger, no sadness, nothing. It was like they had given all hope up. It was like they knew their purpose in life was just to work for the Nazis. They have given up on this life.

As they threw me into a room, they closed my door. I looked around, it was dark with just one candle. I had no bed just a thin cover and a pillow with a small desk. As the days passed, they would only feed me one meal a day. It was a piece of wheat bread and chicken noodle soup. Every single day the Nazi guards would make fun of me and beat me badly leaving lots of bruises, cuts, and lumps on me. It felt like hell itself; they would make me work all day cleaning the buildings and working on the field. I felt like a slave that had no escape. I can't take this treatment any longer; in the past two months I have been here I have lost 30 pounds already. I need to escape... Mother I will try my hardest to come back to you.

Love, Leor

El Silbon, A Mariposa Story

By Najah, Amauri, Curtis

Odilia ran behind Delia to get away from the smell and smoke of the car. They quickly ran into the forest and Delia ran into a tall tree.

"Ouch my head," said Delia. Odilia and Delia looked back to see that their sisters weren't behind them. They called out for them.

Odilia shouted, "C'mon guys, don't play like that"

"Mom's worried enough," said Delia

Pita yelled, "Here I come"

Odilia, Delia, and Pita soon reunited. They started walking back to where the car was parked to find the other girls. They heard one of the sisters screaming from a far distance. It wasn't clear who it was because Pita and Delia were arguing. The girls started running toward the sound. Odilia looked up and started yelling. Only to see Juanita dangling from the air, from what looked like a snake.

Pita suddenly disappeared. When Odilia turned sharply, a giant snake head came towards her. Delia saved her by pulling her hair, then she dragged her to the side.

"We need a plan!" said Odilia.

Pita went for a stick.

"I love my sisters, please don't kill them," Pita said shakily. Then Pita spotted a large sharp stick and she charged at him with it. The stick did no damage. Pita and the sisters started to run deeper into the woods when they lost the monster.

Pita took a breath of relief and looked around for a little bit, then they spotted a wooden cabin. The sisters were scared to enter the cabin because they thought that it would be a trap. They voted for one another to check it out. After all, they need a place to hide.

"We're running out of options," Pita said. Delia found knives, a box of old clothes, and a map in the cabin. She also looked in the back of the cabin in the dark corner and found the parts they needed to fix the car. They camped in the cabin for at least 10 minutes before they heard a loud bang.

The sisters worked together to fight the monster off. They remember how sad and worried their mother would be if something happened to them. They threw knives at the monster striking him in the face. Then the monster stumbled.

"Quick grab the tools we need to fix the car," Delia said. They grabbed the tools and darted back to the car, then quickly fixed the car and went back home.

THE END....