

**THE**  
**SPLENDID**  
**REVIEW**

Fall 2020

# THE SPLENDID REVIEW

**IS PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY**

Houston Junior Woman's Club  
The Jackson Foundation  
Kiwanis Foundation of Houston  
Texas Women for the Arts  
Valero Energy Foundation

Numerous Contributions  
Made in Memory of Karen Yager

## **COVER ARTWORK**

### **Raining Blue**

Jillie, Age 18  
La Porte, Texas

*Since my cancer diagnosis, I have felt "blue".  
Some days a little, some days a lot.*

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Camden \*  
Clay \*\*  
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Sadie  
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Tessa  
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Addie  
Addie  
Addyson  
Ahrie \*  
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Alyssa \*\*  
Angelina \*\*  
Annie, Lynnlea, Libby  
Audrey  
Ben  
Brooklyn \*\*  
Cameron \*\*  
Cayson \*\*  
Charlotte  
Deegan \*\*  
Dunni \*  
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Texas Children's Hospital—Main Campus  
\*Texas Children's Hospital—West Campus  
\*\*Texas Children's Hospital—Woodlands Campus

**YOUTH  
WRITING**

Ages 3-12

# POETRY

## What I Love

My heart loves to color animals and trees.  
My heart loves to eat cheeseburgers with ketchup, mustard,  
and pickles.  
My heart loves baby pink like cotton candy.  
My heart loves my long-sleeved pajamas.  
My heart loves the movie *Aladdin*.  
My heart loves to swim in the pool on hot summer days.  
My heart loves the medium sound of my sister's talking.  
My heart loves perfume that smells like flowers.  
My heart loves to shop for clothes and books.  
My heart loves Qatar for the malls, so I can do more shopping!

*Aldana, age 9*

## My Five Senses Summer Poem

A poem can be  
shiny diamonds that sparkle like happy crystals  
colorful red and blue birds that fly across places  
pretty red roses that smell sweet

A poem can be  
humming and singing birds in summer  
relaxing songs with animal noises  
trees that grow fruits and taste delicious

A poem can be  
lying on the grass and having a picnic in a valley  
kids giggling and screaming for fun on the playground  
making BBQ that smells like honey

*Alison, age 10*

## The Moment of Love

I always like Valentine's Day

the best  
because it's the moment  
you spread love.  
You show people  
how you appreciate them.  
You give love cards  
to your mom, dad, and friends.  
You give sweets,  
like Hersey's Kisses, Reeses,  
and lollipops. Yummy!  
You go out to eat  
and sometimes to school.  
You can stay home and celebrate.  
You buy red heart balloons,  
some hearts,  
some rose petals,  
some roses,  
and some cake!  
You feel special and happy  
and overjoyed  
to be with family.  
I wish more people  
could spread  
more love more often.

*Analiz, age 10*

### **Painting the Rainbow**

Color me pink like a rose in the garden.  
Color me red like the bow in my friend's hair.  
Color me orange like a pumpkin on Halloween and Fanta soda.  
Color me yellow like bananas at my house.  
Color me green like when I paint trees growing.  
Color me blue like the sky.  
Color me purple like my sister's favorite color.  
Color me like all the colors in my rainbow!

*Busola, age 7, almost 8 \**



## What I'd Put in My Magic Box

Oreo McFlurries  
with lots of ice cream

Time alone at Bounce, Bounce  
I can have all the trampolines to myself!

My mama, who cooks the best  
macaroni, fried chicken, and salad

Time working with my grandpa  
in Hempstead City Hall

A black and gray horse named Smoky  
...and Mario Kart games

The smell of popcorn  
The sight of sunflowers and daisies

I'd love to have a magic box.

*CaDaries, age 10 \*\**

## Things I Like

I like to paint my nails with purple sparkle nail polish.

I like my pink shoes that help me spin and jump.

I like to play with toys at the beach.

I like to swim in the pool with my sister Mia  
and my brothers, Junior and Anthony.

I like to eat hot broccoli and carrot soup that mommy makes.

I like to hold my dog, Oreo, and play with him.

I like to wear my big pink dress to sleep when it gets night.

I like to smell pink flowers outside.

I like to paint my fingernails green with silver glitter, all by myself!

I like popcorn and candy.

I like to have my birthday at Chuck E. Cheese.

I like to dress up as a witch for Halloween.

*Carolina, age 3*

### My Favorite Letter Is C

It's in my first name.  
I can write my name.  
I like to draw the letters.  
My mommy reads me Chica-Chica  
Boom-Boom about letters.  
I want my letters to be green  
And blue, my favorite colors.  
C smells like cookies.  
It feels like smooth wood.  
My favorite thing about the letter  
C is that I can write it best.

Carter, age 5 \*\*

### The Airplane

I go to the airport.  
I see Pokey Mokey.  
I like to eat him.  
He's a dragon.  
I go on the airplane.  
It flies!  
They tear the airplane up.  
Because it's paper.

Cierre, age 4 \*



### My Poem

A poem can be  
Honey with little dots of gummies  
A big rainbow across the sky that people watch  
A panda who climbs on trees and eats panda food  
A squishy horse that runs fast at the farm  
Oranges that are sweet inside  
Chicken with soup that's good for your energy  
Cookies you put in milk and eat  
A paper full of letters!

Claire, age 5

### **Damian's Rainbow**

High in the sky,  
made out of colors  
like green and red  
yellow and purple.

I like when they come  
in the morning  
because they  
make me feel happy.

Rainbows say, 'thank you  
for seeing me.  
It makes me happy, too.'  
Rainbows are nice.

*Damian, age 5 \**

### **How to Be David**

Play and color  
Eat bacon and bacon cheeseburgers  
Wear Toy Story, Paw Patrol, and PJ masks on my undies  
Wear superhero shoes with Captain America on them  
Have an Iron Man port to make me strong!  
Drink chocolate milk PediaSure  
Be the brother of two brothers and two sisters  
Watch Toy Story, all three all in one day over and over again!  
Be strong like David from the bible!

*David, age 5*

### **Woody**

Woody is my best friend.  
He helps me through.  
I bring him to the hospital every time.  
He kisses me and then I feel better.  
And he hugs.  
He writes on the bullseye.  
And he talks to Bo Peep.  
And he counts sheep.

I like his boots.  
And he always wears his brown hat.

*David, age 5*

### **Road Trip in Our Camouflage Shoes**

Our shoes are green and black  
and camouflage us  
from danger.  
They have a Nike symbol,  
and they make us jump, climb, and run.  
They take us to FunPlex  
to play video games.  
They take us to SeaWorld  
to play games and win prizes,  
like a tiger shark or Flash.  
They take us to LEGOLAND  
to build stuff.  
They make us so smart that  
we make instructions  
in our heads about  
how to build Legos.  
They take us to the Houston Zoo  
to see tigers and frogs  
and zebras and giraffes.  
Our shoes make us happy.  
They're brand new  
and they don't get dirty  
because they're camouflage!

*Dominick, age 7 & Kenzo, age 5*

### **4<sup>th</sup> of July, Independence Day**

Oh, fireworks on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July,  
you pop in our favorite colors.  
You pop out beautiful colors.  
You show us your American flag colors  
for Independence Day.  
You come in different sizes and shapes,  
like circles and spiders.

You smell like you put out a little fire.  
And you smell like gas.  
You POP like popcorn, so loud  
we have to cover our ears.  
4th of July will come in 3 days.  
We're excited.

*Estrella, age 9, Miclo, age 8, & Stephanie, age 6*

### **Feelings on Earth**

On sparkle pink days,  
I feel happy like a flamingo  
flapping its wings.

On glittery blue days,  
I feel glittery happy  
like a lake in Lufkin.

On brown days,  
I feel glad like a tree  
waving its leaves.

On teal days,  
I feel proud to be a peacock  
attracting a mate.

On black days,  
I feel sleepy and sometimes  
hear my brother snore.

On violet pink days,  
I feel excited  
because it's the end of the day.

All colors  
make the earth beautiful  
and that makes us feel humble.

*Estrella, age 9, Miclo, age 8, & Stephanie, age 6*

### The Actions of Peace

Peace is making a crown of flowers for my head.  
Peace sounds like soothing music.  
Peace is the smell of lavender I use to meditate.  
Peace reminds me of my bed.  
Peace is the color purple that makes me relaxed.  
Peace feels like a new warm puppy under the Christmas tree.  
Peace is like bluebonnets blowing in the breeze.  
Peace is calm and relaxing.  
Peace is an emoji holding up two fingers.  
I feel sleepy when I see peace.

*Fifi, age 9 \**

### My New Glasses

Oh, new glasses,  
I take care of you.  
I love you.  
You glow in the sun.  
My mom bought you for me  
at Wal-Mart.  
You are made of glass,  
and you make me look pretty.  
You help me see everything,  
like animals at the zoo.

*Jackeline, age 7*

### The Keeper of Dreams

The Keeper of Dreams  
is named Unicorn Girl.  
She protects us  
against strangers.  
She protects our dreams  
when we go to sleep,  
so we can dream  
of riding unicorns  
and eating cotton candy.  
Then we feel happy  
in the morning



when we wake up.

*Jackeline, age 7*

### **The Music Fairy**

Protects our music dreams  
by helping us play music.  
And she sings, "Let it Go"  
like Elsa.  
And I feel happy  
like glitter!

*Jackeline, age 7*

### **Building Legos with One Hand**

Legos are my favorite.  
I have them at school.  
We make Lego cities.  
The stick fits in the box  
Like a popsicle.  
I put hair on the girl head,  
Put the telephone on her hand.  
How does this spin around?  
Ta-da! I did it!

*Jason, age 5 \*\**

### **Color Me Like**

Color me like....  
Grass growing in the forest  
A parrot flying tree to tree  
Trees waving their leaves in the wind  
Many vegetables, like spinach and green pepper  
Cucumbers, they are kind of green too  
The wall at the hospital  
The smell of grass and flowers  
Color me like Nature Green!

*Jerry, age 10*

### The Incredible JoJo!

I am a super hero.  
I have super strong muscles  
on my arms and legs.  
I can lift heavy stuff,  
like something heavier than a T-rex.  
I throw a basketball and dribble it, too.  
I lift weights above my head.  
And curl them up, too.  
They are really heavy.  
That's how strong I am.  
Heavier than iron strong!  
Let's sing the song:  
*Incredible JoJo!*  
*Catching the bad guys!*  
*Pow! Pow! Pow!*

*Jonas, age 4*



**I SUPPORT  
JOJO, MY HERO!  
NEUROBLASTOMA  
AWARENESS**

### My Magic Crown

If I put on my magic crown that grants wishes,  
I would wish for a white and gray kitten, so cute.  
I would wish for a Baby Alive that crawls.  
I would wish to go back to the hotel with the swimming pool and hot tub. The  
one we went to last year at Thanksgiving.

*Jordyn, age 6*

### JUNIOR

**J**umps in leaves and like giraffes  
**U**nderstands how to be Spiderman  
**N**otices blue cars, his favorite color  
**I**s really good at eating spaghetti  
**O**nly likes to drink orange juice  
**R**eally likes to go to Fiesta and get trucks

*Junior, age 6*

### LEAVES!

I like to play

with leaves  
at my house  
I jump in them.  
It's FUN!

*Junior, age 6*

### **MY SHOES!**

My shoes are blue and red.  
My feet feel funny when I put them on.  
My shoes take me to the hospital to play.  
My shoes make me spin like a tornado.  
And run really fast.  
I like my shoes good.

*Junior, age 6*

### **The Funny Artist and The Frog**

The funny artist made a picture  
of a dog that jumps and flies.  
You can name them what you like  
and you can have many tries.

The funny artist met a lady  
who was a piano teacher.  
The funny artist told her  
she is a funny creature.

The funny artist told her  
"I think I changed my tune.  
I want to play piano,  
I want learn it soon."

Then he asked the lady  
if she could like his dream.  
She said, "Yes, I'll teach you piano  
let's play it by the by the stream."

She didn't want the water  
her piano was made of wood.

So she moved it far from there,  
and that was very good.

Next, he drew a flying frog  
who let out a big moan,  
Because he ate some very hot lights  
and called the doctor on the phone.

The doctor said your tongue is dead  
forever until you're old.  
You shouldn't eat the lights  
until the lights are cold!

(This poem is for cell phones, computers, any electronic devices that you can watch on. And if you want, you can sing the story.)

*Kaivon, age 6 \**

### **Animals I Like**

I like tigers because they bite.  
I like cows because they have milk.  
I like elephants because they have water.  
I like bunnies because they hop fast.  
I like my dog who likes to drink water.  
I like frogs when they jump.

*Kenneth Ray, age 6*

### **When I Dance...**

I do the Sho and the Floss and the Break It Down.  
My arms wiggle up and down.  
I clap my hands over my head.  
I do circles in the air.  
My arms cross in front.  
My legs and knees wiggle and move side-to-side.  
I hop on one foot and raise my arm up.  
I like to dance to "ShoSho!"

*Kenneth Ray, age 6*

### My Surprise Box

In my surprise box, I will put  
brownies that are gooey and chocolaty,  
the sound of hearing my mom say, "I love you!"  
my favorite sparkly pink shoes that make me feel happy.

In my surprise box, I will put  
Target where I get slime,  
all of Christmas because I spend time with my family,  
my favorite book, *Thirteen*, because it's funny.

My surprise box will be  
neon blue and pink  
with flowers and diamonds  
on the top of the box  
and all the way around it.  
I'll carry my box with me everywhere I go  
because it makes me feel happy.

*Kerylin, age 11*

### Owl

I live in a tree in the jungle.  
I come out and hunt at night.  
I can see really well and far away.  
I sit on the tree branch and wait for food to walk by.  
I sit in silence, so silent that I can hear the wind.  
I wonder when food will come and how long I have to wait.  
When I find food, I say, "Woo-Hoo!"  
I fly down fast so it doesn't run away.  
Then I take it back to the tree to eat  
so other animals don't get it.

*Kerylin, age 10*

### Color Days

On yellow days, I am bright  
like the sun shining hot  
in the desert,  
mostly in the summer.



On pink days, I am cheerful  
like a flamingo wading for fish  
in the river,  
in spring.

On orange days, I am peaceful  
like the chairs and walls  
in the hospital  
to keep patients calm.

On green days, I am excited  
like trees and grass growing  
in the dirt  
during a spring rain.

*Kimberly, age 9*

### **Kimberly's Kitty Cat**

April is my neighbor  
She has a lot of cats --  
One black, two gray and three are white  
But none of them wear hats.

A lot of cats need lots of food  
I know where to buy it.  
A pet store is the perfect place  
Unless they're on a diet.

All the cats are cuddly  
They have a lot of fur  
If rain would make it muddy  
The cats would all go "Grrrrr!"

One cat's name is Buffy  
She is smoky gray  
She is also fluffy  
And bright just like the day.

When I see them all together  
It makes me say "Wow!"

In any kind of weather  
They all say, “meow meow meow!”

*Kimberly, age 9 \**

### **JoJo’s Adventure**

I am JoJo the Butterfly.  
I have red wings  
and a blue body  
with a black head.  
When I flap my wings,  
I fly to Disney World.  
I go on rides, slow rides,  
and say, “Weeee!”  
I meet all the princesses  
who live in the castle.  
And I feel so happy!  
Then I’m thirsty  
so I drink water.

*Klaire, age 6*

### **Ode to Animals**

Dear Dog, how I love thee—  
You are energetic and delightful.  
You chase around and play with joy!  
You are very loving and you care for me.

Dear Owl, how I love thee—  
You are steady and slick  
You are quiet when you fly  
And oh how well you see!

Dear Tiger, how I love thee—  
You are ready to attack  
You sneak up on your prey  
And make them run away.

Dear Cat, how I love thee—  
You are lazy and sleepy  
You move steadily on the ground

And find a quiet place to snooze around.

Dear Octopus, how I love thee—  
You are slimy and wrap your arms around things  
When you freak you send ink  
Then you wink and then you sink.

*Klarissa, age 12 \**

### **Spaghetti!**

Oh, spaghetti, I twirl your noodles and eat them.  
I love the sauce that's on top.  
I love the cheese. It smells yummy.  
It is yellow and tastes good.  
My mom makes it the best!  
My tummy says, "It's yummy!"

*Miranda, age 6*

### **My Fancy Shoes**

My shoes are pink  
with doggies  
all over them.

They make my feet  
feel good.

They take me to the beach  
so I can build  
sand castles.

They take me  
to swim  
in the water park.

They take me to see  
the animals  
at the zoo.

They take me to see



the ducks  
and give them food.

Quack, quack.

My family got me  
my special shoes.

I like them so much  
I want to spin in a circle!

*Nancy, age 5*

### **Noura's Favorites**

Blue is my favorite color.  
My favorite drink is apple juice.  
My favorite place is the Children's Museum.  
My favorite animal is a bunny.  
My favorite noises are ribbit-ribbit like a frog  
And whoo-whoop like a train.  
I say peekaboo  
And play with babies.  
I like my name Noura.

*Noura, age 3 \*\**

### **Seven Ways of Looking at the Moon**

The full moon is round like a basketball  
shining light on people in the night.

The half-moon looks like a half-eaten pie  
sitting there waiting to be eaten.

The new moon is like a necklace  
hanging down from someone's neck.

The crescent moon is like a crescent roll  
that smells like toast popping out of the toaster.

The waxing moon is kinda like a slingshot

shooting paper.

The waning moon is like someone  
pushing a beach ball on the beach.

The quarter moon is like the tip of a fingernail  
with turquoise blue polish.

*Sydney, age 11*

### **The How You Feel Book**

When I'm mad,  
I put my hands on my hips and scrunch my red face.

When I'm happy,  
my cheeks turn pink when I smile.

When I'm sad,  
blue teardrops run down my face when I cry.

When I'm relaxed,  
I am at the beach under the green palm tree.

When I don't feel good,  
I turn yellow and feel like I'm going to throw up.

When I feel sweet,  
I give a pink hug to my friend Lilly.

*Tessa, age 7*

### **How to Be Weston**

Eat Goldfish

Build lots of Lego stuff with my older brother

Wear my soft, black pajama pants

Like the color dark blue

Go to McDonalds and get chicken nuggets, French fries, AND a toy

Drink strawberry, chocolate, white milk, even banana milk,

though I haven't tried that yet

Like fuzzy cats

Love my dogs: Gizmo who's fluffy,  
and Roxie who follows me everywhere and sleeps at my door  
Watch Lego Batman on TV that I've watched quite a couple of times  
Put air in the pool so I can swim  
Go to Six Flags and see my cousins  
Celebrate my birthday on June 19, 2013!

*Weston, age 6*

## FICTION

### Little Puppy

Little Puppy says,  
"I love playing games."  
She likes to play Break the Ice  
with Addyson.  
She helps to pick up the ice  
and Addyson  
puts it in the tray.  
Little Puppy is the helper.  
She tells Addyson,  
"You forgot one."

*Addyson, age 3*

### Going to the Beach

If I were at the beach today, I'd hear the waves and the birds calling. I  
would see birds eating fish from the ocean.

On the beach, I'd build sand castles with my brothers. It would smell fishy.  
Sometimes I smell the salt in the water.

When we get tired of playing, we would eat ham and cheese sandwiches with  
Hot Cheetos and cold water.

I like to go out into the water to jump the waves, but I don't go in too deep

because when the water is deep, I can't see the sand and I don't know what's there.

*Amber, age 10 \*\**

### Porcupine Clothes

The porcupine is spiny. He looks sad. He doesn't want the spines. They look sharp. They need to cut them. He likes his clothes. They are red. I like the line on her clothes. She will be happy if they get the spines off.

*Autumn, age 4 \*\**

### The Mysterious Harp

A boy and his dog are walking through the woods when they see a magical harp. They had heard an ancient legend about it that said a mystical harp with magical powers was hidden in the woods somewhere.

Whoever found it would discover a note that said: *Whoever plays this will have magical powers like Shazam in the comic book movie.* But the note was a trick and the harp carried a curse. The harp played itself, and the boy and the dog walked to it because they couldn't resist.

They touched the harp and the boy was cursed to live in a gray world forever. He was angry at himself for being tricked. He felt gray, doomed, like hope was lost, but there was another legend that said if he found a magical stone in a cave, in The Long-Lost Forest of Evergreen, the curse could be lifted.

The boy wandered through the forest and went into several caves. Finally, he got to one with ancient Greek above the entrance. Inside, he found the stone glowing purple.

He could see color again! When he picked it up, it whirred with power. It transferred its power to him so he could glow purple like Hercules.

*Blayton, age 12 \*\**

### Stuck in the Woods

Once upon a time there was a teenager name Calvin. He was 20 and so he drove into the woods. His car broke down. He heard sounds coming from left

and right. He heard a wolf howl in the distance. He heard bears on the other side. He was scared. He tried to fix his car, but he couldn't do it. So he ran.

He saw a house. He went to the house and knocked on the door. But nobody was there. He went back into the woods to see what was making the sounds. But he couldn't find it. He kept looking and looking and looking. He couldn't find anything.

Calvin knew he needed to get out of the woods. So he went back to his car and he tried to start it up. And it worked! No one knows how it got fixed. He didn't care! He just had to get out of there. So he drove back to his house which was by the woods. He could still hear the wolf and the bears. He thought he would be safe in the house.

He heard something beating on the door. He didn't open it because he was scared, and there were no neighbors near him. Something pushed the door in. It was the wolf! Calvin ran to his bedroom and locked the door. The wolf tried to get in to his bedroom. He got in, but Calvin was hiding under the bed. The wolf didn't find him and went back outside to find other people.

Calvin was scared to come out from under his bed. Finally he came out from under the bed. He peeked outside the door, and he saw the wolf was gone. He went back into his bedroom. But the bear came! So he hid in his closet. The bear didn't leave. So Calvin came out to talk to the bear.

"Please don't eat me!" said Calvin.

The bear said, "I'm just trying to make friends."

Calvin said, "We can be friends."

"Yay!" said the bear. And then he promised to protect Calvin from the wolf. You never know where you're gonna find a new friend.

*Camden, age 8 \**

### **Unfortunately, Fortunately**

A guy was sitting at a table with the only lamp he could find. He was doing some work, and he saw something crawling under the rug. He thought it was a cat. It shook and rattled the table. When he looked under the table, he saw the rug was poked up.

He rushed to go get a pocket knife to see what it was and for protection. He opened the knife, cut the carpet open, and, unfortunately, he saw it was a giant rat. The rat was dead, and cockroaches and beetles crawled out of it. The guy ran away to get help.

The exterminator came and said, “Do you want us to exterminate the bugs or the rats?”

The guys said with obvious frustration, “The bugs *and* the rats.”

“That will be \$200.”

Unfortunately, the poor man opened up his wallet and saw he only had a fifty. “Can I pay you back later?”

“It will be an extra \$100.”

“I’m going to have to wait a month or two for a paycheck because I work at McDonalds.”

Fortunately, the poor man won \$30,000 in the lottery. He paid the exterminating company and the neighborhood association to take over a neighboring property for a rental income so he wouldn’t be broke again. It paid his way to college too.

*Clay, age 12 \*\**

### **Christmas in July**

It was nighttime and I left cookies and milk out for Santa Claus. I heard something on my roof like stomping and running, so I put the cookies and milk on the table. Then I saw my presents falling into my house from the fireplace.

I was curious and confused, so I climbed a ladder to the roof. And I saw Santa! I tried to warn Santa about the edge of the roof, but he fell! As he was falling, he said, “Someone has to be the next Santa!”

I went over to him, and there was a label inside his suit that said: *Pick up the suit, the hat, the jacket and put them on because they’re magic.* I put everything on and like magic I grew a beard and a big belly.

I went back on the roof and got my sleigh and went back to the North Pole and gave all the kids presents.

When it was morning, I told all my friends that I was Santa and they believed me! They became my helpers. Then everybody had a nice Christmas.

Before all this happened, I used to be in a rock band. I was guitarist and lead singer. I was Paul in the Beatles. So then we were like a band of the Beatles, but we were the Christmas Beatles.

In fact, we wanted to keep the tradition of having two Christmases throughout the year, so we celebrate one in July and one in December. I am the Santa of Summer.

*Connor, age 7*

### **If I Had A Dog**

If I had a dog, I would name her Ishy. She would be white and she would be very small and fluffy. We would go in the backyard and she would chase the ball like playing soccer. I will play soccer too. Ishy will win because she is better than me. I will give her a special dog treat because she wins! We are both tired after playing soccer all day, and we will sleep. I will sleep in my bed, and Ishy will sleep in her bed. But she will look in the window to see me, because she wants to sleep with me. But she can't. Even though she won the soccer match, she is angry, but that is a dog's life.

*Dalia, age 9 \**

### **Magic Wand**

If I had a magic wand, I'd make it do my homework. I would use the wand to make a clone so I could be in two places at once. One of me would be at home and the other at school which I don't like.

I like to watch TV at home in my room. I watch Disney. I change from show to show. I can sleep in my bed which is more comfortable than hospital beds. My favorite stuffed animal is there. It's a hedgehog.

The walls of my room are white, but there is sports stuff all over. I have an Xbox and play it with my friends when they are available.

My favorite things to eat in my room are baby carrots, salsa, beans, and watermelon.

*Eduardo, age 10 \*\**

### **Natural Park**

If I were in this postcard, Van Gogh's *The Pink Orchard*, I'd set up a picnic. We'd have lettuce, ham, avocado, and a little tomato on our sandwiches. We'd have fruit and lime Gatorade to drink. For snacks, we'd eat Takis, Lay's Potato Chips, and Doritos. My cousins would be there too. We'd explore the park. We'd play sports in the open areas under the green, orange, and white leaves on a sunny day in spring

*Eli, age 10 \*\**

### **The Gingerbread Man**

An old lady was all by herself at her house because her husband passed away. She felt sad. Then she remembered something that her husband made for her on her birthday. It was a cookie that looked just like her husband. He gave it to her on the day he was going to pass away so she could remember him. Her birthday was on the day he died. He was driving and got into a car crash.

So she grabbed the cookie and put it in the oven for two minutes because it was cold. When the oven stopped, something jumped out and she heard something fall. It was her pans. Then she saw a gingerbread cookie sitting down and eating an apple. She said, "What! Are you a cookie?" It was the gift from her husband, the cookie. It looked just like her husband. It was a gingerbread man cookie.

Then she started chasing it. She almost got to it, but the gingerbread man ran outside the door and stopped when he saw a pig. The gingerbread man said, "You can't catch me! I'm faster than you! I'm the gingerbread man!" The pig chased him!

Then the gingerbread man saw little shoes, little ant shoes, so he quickly ran into the house and quickly sewed the shoes bigger so they would fit him. They were shoes with boosters, so he used them to get away from the pig and old lady. He jumped out of the window.

Then the gingerbread man stopped at the lady's pond and a beaver was sitting there. He saw the gingerbread man. The beaver was sneaky and had a good idea. He told the gingerbread man that he would help him cross the pond. The gingerbread man said, "Should I trust you? I think you just want to eat me!"

Then the beaver took the gingerbread man over to the pond. Then the beaver said, "My back is hurting. Can you get on my neck?" Then he said, "My neck is hurting. Maybe can you get on my tail?" The gingerbread man didn't fall when he was on the tail because he was imagining that he was surfing.

Then, the beaver's tail flipped the gingerbread up and into his mouth and ate him! Hum.

*Emiliano, age 8*

### **The Rivera Family Rescues Sonic**

It was a day like any other. Mom and I were in the car going to the movies, but there were only two tickets left to the *Sonic the Hedgehog* movie. I said, "We got the last two tickets!"

The man in the ticket office said, "Hurry up, please. The movie is about to start."

We got snacks and saw the movie. Then a horrible storm happened. The storm screamed, "Run!"

After we got back home, a DVD knocked my head and said, "Do not play at 3:00 PM." Five crayons came flying at me, until I broke them. I said, "Wait a minute. What is this DVD for? We should watch this DVD."

I had a key inside that was legendary. This key led us to a legendary room. When we got there five minutes later, Sonic was stuck inside a cage. I got him out. Sonic and the family lived happily ever after.

*Enrique, age 7 \*\**

### **The Alien Pizza**

Three Toy Story aliens came from Pizza Planet. They rode on a pizza space

ship. They came in PEACE—pizza. They were spreading PEACE—pizza around the world. They used magic to spread it. Then the world turned into a pizza. When I walked outside, it smelled like cheese and sauce and dough. I said, “Yum!”

*Ethan, age 6*

### **The Enchanted Forest**

A random person walks into the forest and out of nowhere a special harp appears. The harp has the power to grant any wish. Alex doesn't know the harp has special powers. He wonders what it could be doing out in the enchanted forest, which has the longest trees you could ever see and bluest of blue waters in a stream. He's mesmerized by the harp and drawn to music it makes. Alex tries to play it and the harp disappears. He never makes a wish on it!

*Hannah, age 12 \*\**

### **Adventure of the City**

There was a monkey traveling all around the world. He got tired so he had to rest. He needed to find food because he didn't bring food. He went to the city, but everyone was afraid because he was a red and blue monkey. Then he saw a bakery, so he went inside. There was an elephant named Ellie who was working there. Monkey asked for banana and Ellie didn't have one. So he told Ellie he would make him an apple pie. Monkey looked at the apple and then he licked it to taste it. Then he turned all red! Then Monkey got scared, so Ellie gave him a blueberry pie. Then Monkey turned blue! He was scared, so Ellie gave him a banana pie. Then Monkey turned back to normal. Monkey was happy that he was back to normal.

He went out of the bakery and he saw a giraffe selling green apples. So he asked for a green apple. Giraffe gave him a green apple and Monkey ate it and he turned all green! Then the giraffe gave him a banana. Monkey ate the banana and turned back to normal and was happy again.

Then he went out of the city and said, “That was crazy, I turned into so much colorful things!”

Then Monkey saw a rainbow apple. So he ate it. Then he turned into rainbow colors. Monkey said, “Whoa! This is so cool!”

Then he went to another city. He saw many things. He saw diamonds and gold. He wanted them, but he didn't have money. So he took some gold and he ran off. Then, the police were after him.

He said, "Oh no! What did I do?"

Then he remembered he took some gold. Then he said sorry to the police and gave back the gold. Then he went to the jungle and saw a party, but he was not invited. So he dressed up like an elephant and went in. It was so cool. There were a bunch of rainbows, confetti, and cake. He stayed there almost all day. Then he got tired. He wanted to go home, but he didn't know where his home was. So he saw a hut. It wasn't his, but he went in anyway. He saw three chairs. He sat on them and slept. Then the next day, when he woke up, he saw Ellie.

And Ellie said, "What are you doing here?"

He said, "I didn't have anywhere to go, so I came here to sleep."

Then they became friends.

*Isabella, age 8 \**

### **Bobby, the Unicorn**

In summer, I like to go to the zoo.

I like to pet a unicorn named Bobby.

She feels squishy and happy!

She looks like my polka dot socks with a lot of pink!

She says, "NEIGH" when she says HELLO to me.

I feed her six apples. She says, "Give me them!"

Then she says, "Hop on! Let's go for a ride."

She flies fast and takes me home.

Then my mom says, "Good to see you!"

*Jackeline, age 7*

### **Dragon Story**

There was once a kid and, 50 years later, he told the story of what happened to him. There was an abandoned castle and no one knew what was inside. So one time, the kid decided to prepare to see what was inside. He got armor

and a sword and a shield. He checked everywhere in the castle, except the dungeon.

Then he saw a big, blue, sleeping dragon. He approached quietly, but he stepped on a branch and it made a noise. The dragon was so sleepy he didn't hear the noise. So the kid walked up slowly. Suddenly, there was a big rumbling noise. It was the kid's stomach, which woke up the dragon. The dragon's breakfast was right there....the kid.

The kid escaped before the dragon could eat him. But before he escaped, the dragon scratched the kid's arm and roared loudly like a T-rex.

Years later, the kid remembered the story every time he got a scratch on his arm.

*Javier, age 10*

### **The Magical Good Wizard and the Magical Bad Wizard**

There were two wizard twin brothers. Ever since they were kids, one was good and one was bad. The good wizard brother helped people whenever they were in danger, and he offered to help when they needed groceries. But the bad wizard brother was evil. When he saw people in danger or they needed help with groceries, he ignored them. And he always ruined his good brother's plans.

Then one day, the bad wizard brother did what he always did --he never helped people in danger. But his heart didn't want that to happen. He tried to not help, but he ended up helping. For the first time, he felt happiness! He felt much happier. He was sort of like the Grinch. At first his heart was small. But then, after he helped people, his heart became bigger --to twice the size!

Then he went back home and told his brother the news of what happened. The good wizard brother said, "I'm glad for you."

*Javier, age 10*

### **Dinosaurs!**

Contasaurus has two horns on his head. He is the strongest dinosaur and bigger than T-rex. He has spikes on his back and little arms like T-rex. And he

fighters T-rex! He swings his tail and knocks T-rex down and bites his tail. He's the strongest ever. He says, "ROAR! NEEEE!" He eats meat, so he's a carnivore.

But some dinosaurs eat plants and they are herbivores, like Ankylosaurus, who swings his tail back and forth. Paraphimosia eats plants, too. He makes noises and protects himself by using his horn. Triceratops eats plants, too.

But Velociraptor eats meat.

Spinosaurus eats fish and swims. His spine is orange and protects him from bigger dinosaurs.

*Jonas, age 4*

### **Jordyn's Story**

This is my story about my brown cat Lorna. She has tan spots and pink ears. She is outside chasing a gray mouse. The mouse's name is Elise. There is a beautiful sunset. The sunset is yellow. There is a bluebird in the sky with an orange beak. The bird's name is Laura. Laura sees Lorna chase Elise. Lorna catches Elise and they become good friends.

*Jordyn, age 6 \**

### **My Princess Story**

My princess name is Elsa. I like to roll my hands and dance to music. That's what Elsa does in Freeze My Elsa dress is dark blue, not light blue. My sparkly flip-flops will look good with the dress when I dance. I wear a heart-shaped necklace. My hair is long and I wear it in a braid. My crown has white diamonds.

*Justice, age 5 \*\**

### **My Dinosaur**

What would a Dinosaur do if he had to take medicine? He wouldn't feel like taking the medicine. He would run away. The Tyrannosaurus would say, "Wooooarr." He roars.

He lives in the forest on the earth. He eats meat. He's a carnivore. If I had one for a pet, I'd name him "I Don't Know."

*Kaleb, age 4 \*\**

## My Dog Tootsie

I have a little puppy that's new and I dress her up in a dog tutu. She likes it because she runs around and doesn't want to take it off. What a girly puppy!

In the morning, she wakes me up by licking my face. She gives kisses all the time.

My favorite thing about Tootsie is that she's calm and when we got her, she didn't complain. She only whines when I leave her alone in her cage. I love my dog.

*Kira, age 8 \*\**

## Princess and Santa

There is a doll named Cinderella. She likes to dance alone.

She sings "Jingle Bells" all the way to Santa's workshop. Cinderella plays with all his toys. Her favorite is a tiny swimming pool for dolls. She can dance swim. She has a rainbow unicorn bathing suit. Yay for her!

This is her joke: "Why is the leaf crossing the road? Because the branch is about to fall down!"

Santa laughed so hard that he ran in a line for twenty-eighty miles.

*Laila, age 5 \*\**

## A Big Giant Man

Once there was a big giant man. He was black and green and as tall as a tree. He was scary. He stomped his feet. He banged a lot and everything around him fell down. He chased people around.



People were afraid of him. And they went to a safe place, so they didn't have to see him. They went to a house. The big giant man knocked at the door and stomped his feet. The people shouted, "Who is that?"

The big giant man said, “It’s a big giant man.” Then the big giant man broke the house because they didn’t let him in.

Then the people were screaming, “Go away from us! Go away from us!”

Then the big giant man was scared because people were screaming at him, so he ran away and went back home.

*Leonardo, age 9*

### All About My Favorites

Indominus Rex is a hybrid dinosaur. Hybrid means it was made by two different things. He came from Velociraptor and T-Rex that lived a long, long time ago. Indominus Rex could camouflage and kill a T-Rex. A T-Rex could kill a T-Rex too.

On a video, I saw red blood on a man. The man said, “He’s camouflaged!” He got eaten by Indominus Rex. That’s why I like them so much. They eat people.

Audrey II is a ginormous plant who says, “Feed Me!” I got to know Audrey II from a movie I watch with Daddy. It’s called *Little Shop of Horrors*.

*Luca, age 6 \*\**

### Black Panther

My favorite Superhero is Black Panther. He is strong, tough, and has sharp nails. He has speed and jumps high. He’s strong so those are his superpowers.

His family turns into panthers, the animals. His family protects him.

One bad guy is named Zeus. He can punch very hard, and he’s the champion of boxing. He’s Black Panther’s stepbrother. They fight each other. Black Panther wins and Zeus dies. Now the world is safer.

I’m like the Black Panther because we’re both strong and fast. If I were the Black Panther, I’d save the earth from villains and bad guys too.

*Michael, age 9 \*\**

## The Secret Life of My Pets

One day when my people were at school, Buddy and Charlie were home alone.

Charlie said, "Buddy, let's have a party. Promise you won't tell Mom and Michael."

"Sure," said Buddy.

Charlie eats the most, so he said, "Let's have lots of food."

"And lots of games and friends," Buddy said.

Their neighbors King, Diamond, Chocolate, and Tiny came over. They played fetch and Chocolate threw the ball because he's the tallest.

They found hot dogs in the freezer and ate them like Popsicles. Tiny said, "Let's have a competition. Whoever wins will get a bone." Buddy won.

Then they danced to loud, rock music. The neighbors heard the music and the barking, so they called the parents. The parents came home immediately and ruined the party.

Since the Chocolate heard the neighbors calling the people, he sent everyone out and planned a second party for next Saturday at his house.

*Michael, age 12 \*\**

## My Rainbow Shines Bright

My rainbow gives you good luck, but only when it's raining.

The sun comes out and makes a rainbow that shines bright.

It smells like fish and mud. It looks red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, pink (But I don't like orange.) My rainbow makes me happy, and I jump!

My rainbow disappears when the sun comes out, and there are no more rainbows.

*Miranda, age 6*

### My Rainbow Story

The rainbow has colors of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet.

After it rains, a rainbow comes! I love when the colors come out! Then the sun comes and the rainbow disappears. And the grass gets too long and the flowers open and the trees get wet and they get bigger and bigger. Then everything looks pretty.

*Miranda, age 6, almost 7*



### Poppy's Adventure

Poppy likes to put pictures of herself and all her other troll friends in a scrapbook. The trolls love going to the beach. They make sand castles and like to swim too.

They hide from the Bergens who eat trolls. They hide under a big old clam, in the mouth of the clams who were nice. When the Bergens go away, they come out, but the trolls are sad because the Bergens ruined the party.

Poppy's dad hit the meanest, tallest Bergen. She is purple. A lot of purple. The nicest Bergen Bridget kills the mean ones. Now everyone is safe.

*Natalie, age 5 \*\**

### Everest

Everest is my favorite Paw Patrol. I love her so much. Everest likes muffins. She likes food. She eats slowly. Everest likes to play with my toy bear Fifi! I got Fifi for my birthday on July 31. I was 4.

*Noura, age 4 \*\**

### Magic Shoes!

I want to paint my shoes blue-black, my favorite color. They would give me special powers. Poof! Magic! I would be invisible. You could not see me. Then I would open the closet and find the key to unlock the door. I'd go outside and play on the trampoline. Then I'd scare my sister and all the boys. Then my brother Oto would paint his shoes like mine, and he'd turn invisible too. Oto

would go swim with sharks and wouldn't be scared. We'd both spin around and kick. Then we'd eat cheeseburgers and turn back to normal. And then turn back to invisible.

*Oto, age 3, & Mano, age 4*

### **Simba and Oto and Bad Guy Sky**

There was a lion named Simba. His fur was red, and he had fur around his face. He could scream loud like a big lion. He screamed whenever he saw an alligator. Simba knew a shark named Oto. Oto swam in the water, but Simba couldn't swim.

There was a bad guy lion named Sky. He beat Simba up and Simba screamed. Then Simba beat up Sky, the bad guy. Then Sky went to Rock Island.

Then Sky walked back and saw Simba. Simba screamed again. Simba caught Sky. Then Oto the shark swam up, jumped in the water, and beat up Sky. He bit him with his sharp teeth and shook his fin. Sky used his sharp claws to scratch Oto. But Oto got really fast and swam away.

Then Simba screamed even louder and went up to Sky. Simba scratched Sky's eye. So Sky was sad and walked back to Rock Island.

*Oto, age 3, & Mano, age 4*

### **The Elephant Diaper Story**

Once there was an elephant who was swimming to the park. He sprayed water with his trunk and splashed someone. They said, "No elephants allowed!" Then he came out of the water and started walking.

He walked in a diaper to see the tiger. He saw the tiger and hid behind the tree. Then he fought the tiger. The elephant won. But the tiger thought he won. So they became diaper best friends.

*Oto, age 3, & Mano, age 4*

### **If I Were a Dolphin**

I'd communicate with other dolphins with echoing. I'd say, "Do you want to be friends?"

They'd say, "Sure."

We'd jump out of the water and go back in with a splash. I love to be in the water, and I wouldn't need a life jacket.

Dolphins eat fish. I don't.

*Sadie, age 8 \*\**

### **The Three Hero Hamsters**

Once two hamsters named Lilly and Lillian went into the forest to their house. They went to their cages and took care of their three children. Lilly's three children were named Laurel, Norah, and Hattie. Lillian's children were named Lucy, Dash, and Violet.

Then Lillian's three pups were at the park with Lilly's children. They went into a river, and Lilly and Lillian were floating on their lily pads. They were floating along when, suddenly, they couldn't find their pups anywhere.

So they went back and searched their homes, their rooms, and the mall.

Finally, they found their pups! They were stuck on the play structure at the park. Three of the pups were on a chain and they were too scared to get down, so Lilly climbed up the chain and saved Dash, Violet, and Hattie.

Lucy, Laurel, and Norah were up too high. They were stuck on the roof of the play structure. So Lillian called her friend Leah, and together they each saved a child. Leah saved Norah and Laurel, and Lillian saved Lucy. Then they both went home after an exhausting day.

But then Lillian broke one of her paws. So they wrapped it up and went home. Lucy, Dash, and Violet helped their mom get better.

Three months later, Lillian felt better and her paw was healed. And everybody had a party to celebrate! YAY!

*Sadie, age 8*

### **The Dream Fairy**

One night, a fairy visited a boy when he was sleeping. She wanted to change his dreams because he was having sad dreams. So she used her powers. Then the boy had a dream of his dog. It was happy dream. They played at home. They got food and went to the park to eat it. They had a picnic. They played at the park. They went back home. They took a shower. They read a story. Then they went to sleep. Then the boy woke up and thought it was real, but it was really a dream. Then he took his dog for a walk and remembered the happy dream.

*Tama'a, age 8*

### **The Fast Horse**

The horse is a girl. She is brown. She likes to jump. I call her Isabel. I am on her back, ready to jump. Horses are fun to ride. I'm really up high, like when I'm on a swing going so high I would like to touch God.

She is friendly. Isabel likes other horses. She puts her head on their shoulders. They like to race. Isabel wins all the time. She lives in a barn and goes there when she gets tired. I pet her and she falls asleep.

*Taraji, age 8 \*\**

### **The Unicorn and Dog Magic**

One day, a unicorn named Rosa and a dog named Judge went on an adventure. The unicorn had some pink, magical wings to fly. So Judge jumped on Rosa's back, and they went to the Rainforest Café in Galveston.

There was a ride there, and Rosa used 300 tickets to ride. Then she went outside and it was sunny, so she put her sunglasses on to protect against the magical wind and sun.

They ate some lunch and looked at the fish. Rosa got a magical apple seed, and Judge got a little bit of dog food and cheese sticks.

The magical apple seed gave Rosa wish magic. So she made a wish! She wished to have the best friend in the whole entire world. It came true! Her best friend was a little turtle named Razy. She knew where his house was, so she went there, and they rode bikes together.

And then they met up with their other friends named Addie and RufRuf. Razyzy went back home, so Rosa played with Addie and Judge played with RufRuf. Addie put on a mask and scared Judge. It was a purple mask that made her look scary. Judge said, "Ahh! Mommy, come here!" Addie had green things under her mask that were evil patches. That's what scared Judge. So she put friendly, pink cheeks on her face so Judge wouldn't be scared anymore. And then they were all friends.

*Tessa, age 7*

### **Uni the Unicorn**

One day there was a unicorn named Uni the Unicorn. She went to her home and made 4<sup>th</sup> of July stuff. And she made a pink flower. Then she went on her computer and watched a person on YouTube make a unicorn cake. Her computer is a pink heart with a pink keyboard. She had a busy day.

*Tessa, age 7*

### **The Magical World**

I look up and see a unicorn running through the clouds.  
I look down and see a rainbow going across the sky.  
To my left and right are the stars shining in the midnight sky.  
The clouds are covered in sparkles of dust.  
I hear silence, and it feels calm.  
It reminds me of being in a magical world.  
When I close my eyes, I imagine holding a stuffed toy.  
It keeps me company.  
I breathe in happiness.  
I breathe out the sadness.  
I rest my thought of the magical world going away  
on the end of the clouds.  
I feel better than I felt before I got here.

*Vicmary, age 10 \**

## Princessland

Once upon a time in a castle in Candyland, there lived a unicorn named Sparkles. Sparkles belonged to the Princess Victoria. Sparkles had a gold horn, a light purple mane and tail, and light pink wings.

Sparkles was a lot of fun. She played games with Princess Victoria when Princess Victoria got bored. Sometimes, when Princess Victoria got really bored, Sparkles would take her flying on her back. Princess Victoria liked to go to Florida to see Disneyworld.

There were other Princesses there that she could play with and eat ice cream. Princess Victoria loved strawberry ice cream. She shared her ice cream with Sparkles. Sparkles was happy to eat strawberry ice cream.

Princess Victoria asked the princesses to come back to Candyland castle and have a sleep over. They said 'Yes!'

They watched movies. They loved Beauty and the Beast. While they were watching movies, Sparkles watched with them. She liked watching movies. She didn't mind sharing her princess with the other princesses. And they made blueberry cupcakes! Sparkles got to eat one! And she loved it!

Sparkles took a nap after eating her cupcake. Princess Victoria laid down with her. All the Princesses laid down too. It was the best sleepover ever!

*Victoria, age 9 \**

## The Lovely Horse

Let me tell you all about my horse. My horse was brown with a fluffy tail. His name was Raven. Raven lived in the country, where he saw an apple on the ground. So he ran over and ate the apple. He ran everywhere, and he liked to drink from the pond, where the water tasted nice and cool.

Suddenly, Raven got scared when he heard a sound! So he turned around and saw a girl. She was a friendly girl named Layla. Layla touched him and petted him. He liked Layla, and they played and ran together.

Then Layla went back home. Raven was sad, so he lay down on the grass.

The next day Layla came back. Raven was so happy that he ran towards her, so she got an apple for him. He ate it and it was so sweet. He wanted to thank her, so he gave her a ride on his back. They went into the forest, where they

played and made a leaf pile and jumped in it. They both felt happy. Then Raven reached for an apple and Layla saw a snake. She screamed!

So Raven put Layla on his back and ran back to where he lived. She was out of breath, so they took a break. Then they got water from the pond. They ate hay and apples. Then Layla petted Raven and said she wanted to keep him.

So they went to her house and her mom said it was okay if Raven wanted to stay with her. But Raven was uncomfortable there because there wasn't a pond. He missed his pond. So he ran back to where he lived.

But he ran back to see Layla every day. She got him an apple every day. She hugged him every day and kissed him every night.

*Zury, age 9*

## **NONFICTION**

### **Making Music**

I like to make music on the keyboard.

I dance and make music.

I play the keyboard.

And sing into the microphone.

And spin the record.

And press the drum.

And then say, "I'm done!"

*Addie, age 4*

### **My Craft**

First, you get white paper.

Then, get some glue.

Shake the bottle if the glue gets bubbles.

Put some glue on colored craft peanuts.

Then, put the peanuts on the paper so they stick.

Put them together on the paper.

When it gets full, you stop like a STOP sign.

Then, you draw a unicorn.

*Addie, age 4*

### **What I Like/Don't Like**

I like arts and crafts, but I don't really like watching TV because it's not good for you. Sleep is better for you. But some movies are okay. They help you go to sleep like babies.

I like chicken nuggets from McDonalds. There is nothing I don't like.  
I eat everything.

I like to drink water with ice, but I don't like soda.

*Addie, age 4*

### **How to Play Break the Ice**

Put the ice in rows. Squeeze them in.

Do it together and take turns.

Set the red polar bear on the top. Carefully. Whew!

You can move the bear around if you want by moving the big block.

One team is the green team.

One team is the yellow team.

Hammer one piece of ice and take turns.

But if Little Puppy helps and hits more than one cube,  
she will lick you to tell you when it's your turn.

Little puppy gets excited and breaks the ice.

*Addyson, age 3*

### **The Time When I Played Hide-and-Seek**

Me and my sisters and brothers were playing all together.

We all said, "Not it!" And I was 'it.'

I counted to 10, and then I went look for my brothers and sisters. I found my little sister Ahmari in the backyard. She was hiding behind a tree. Her arm was poking out from the tree!

Then I found my little brother Lazarus. He was at the back porch. He wasn't even hiding! I asked him and my sister to help me look for the other big ones. Then I found my sister Kaelynn.

Kaelynn told me where my big brother Davon was hiding. He was hiding in a tree. Kaelynn found Aquera. And Aquera got a ladder and climbed the tree and tagged Davon. Then the first person I saw was my younger sister Ahmari, so she started to count to 10.

Then we saw my cousin Zuri. We played hide and seek with her! And I had a good hiding spot! I was hiding somewhere where they couldn't find me — in the storage building. It was kinda creepy there, I thought there was a killer clown behind me.

So I went out, and then I went to grab the phone from the front porch and turned on the flashlight so I wouldn't be scared. There was spiders and stuff in there, ewww!

Ahmari found everyone except me. They all were looking for me everywhere and they told me that I appeared out on nowhere.

When they found me, they said, "Where were you at? In Candyland?"

I said, "No I was in the storage building, so why did you think I was in Candyland?"

"That was a hard place for us to find you," they said.

Then we went inside the house and got some things to drink, like water and juice. We all like flavors.

*Ahrie, age 7 \**

### **Aiden's All Stars!**

I get baseball caps from all over the country. I think I have 50. The one I like to wear the most is my lime green Astros one, lime green like my cancer color!

I love Fortnite. I have a Fortnite backpack, socks, and Nintendo. But I don't have a Fortnite hat yet!

Today, I am wearing my white, black, and yellow cap from the Elco Raiders in Pennsylvania, where they play high school baseball. One of the players signed the hat, just for me!

I never wash them because I wear a new cap each day!

*Aiden, age 8*

## Types of Art I Like

I like to draw with pencil and shade them in. I draw anything. I haven't done much this summer because I've been sick, but soon I'll be back at school. This year I'll take art.

My best ones were the times when I drew people with clothing and flowers from ideas. Sometimes I look at drawings on Pinterest and then I try. I do calligraphy too. I like one I do, but Gothic writing style is hard because of the points. It's kind of like how Harry Potter wrote.

*Alyssa, age 12 \*\**

## Angelina's Rainbow

I love Dolly. Nana bought her for me. I draw a picture of Dolly I'm going to draw with markers.

Now I'm drawing a balloon. It's blue. I'm going to draw it. I want red now. Another balloon. I want orange. Here we go. My favorite color is pink. I'm wearing a blue dress with green and orange.

*Angelina, age 2 \*\**

## The Beach House

Nana has a beach house in Surfside. It's really special because we've both had our birthdays there. And there is a parade on St. Patrick's Day and 4<sup>th</sup> of July. There's a beach there, too, where we hear birds and seagulls and the sound of the waves.

Annie: My eyes get red from the salt and sun.

Lynnlea: I pick up seashells.

Our dads take us out in the water really far where we can't touch. We have friends there and they like to invite us over to go to the beach and play. We have a splash pad, too, which is kinda like a waterbed that you fill up, and it has a waterfall. We can color on the splash pad, too, with special crayon-chalk-markers, but it feels kinda gross when it gets wet.



We spend the night there too.

Annie: I sleep on the top bunk bed with my daddy.

Lynnlea: I sleep on the bottom bunk with mommy or nana.

Our nana has had that beach house since 2013. It's fun there! We can't wait to go back and have a fun time with our favorite people.

*Annie, age 6 & Lynnlea, age 7 & favorite cheerleader, Libby, age 17*

### **Elsa, My Puppy**

I love that my puppy Elsa is so cute.

She wears a red bow, and her fur is soft yellow.

She has brown eyes, as brown as light wood.

My second grade teacher, Mrs. Neely, gave her to me.

I like to play with her.

I make her tail wag, and her paws can move too.

I pretend I'm her and I say, "Aof, Aof!"

I also like to bring her to the clinic.

She's very soft, and I snuggle with her.

And she makes me feel happy.

*Audrey, age 8*

### **Bonjour**

I went to France for four weeks

to visit my grandma and grandpa and my cousins.

I played with my cousins--

Adele who is nine and Tim who is six, like me.

I liked when grandpa was cooking.

Grandma cooked too.

I kinda ate fish and a lot of things!

We had candies that we cannot find here.

I liked bubble gum the best.

*Ben, age 6*

## Playing with Cohen

I liked when Cohen fetched the ball. He ran very fast and slid on the floor. He brought the ball right back. He dropped the ball between our chairs because he liked us. He was making friends with me. I got to pet him. He was soft. I wondered why he didn't chew on cords like other dogs. Mom says he went through a lot of training. He's coming later to snuggle with me in my bed.

*Brooklynn, age 7 \*\**

## My Dog Bella

I like dogs. I have a dog at home that's black, white, and middle-sized. She's female. My dog Bella is sweet. We play fetch and go outside for walks every day. She likes poop! Bella is eight years old and fluffy. She's fast. When the cars go by, she chases them but doesn't catch them.

*Cameron, age 6 \*\**

## Pets and a Mystery

My cousins have a dog named Coby and a cat named Shorty like mine. Coby shakes his head and comes up to climb up on me. I'm his favorite. My cat likes to play, but she's at my Daddy's house and at Pops. Pops is Grandpa.

My cousin Kaden broke his arm and bumped his knee when he fell off a bike. He was bleeding. Now he is okay and he's looking for clues through a red magnifying glass.

*Cayson age 4 \*\**

## I'm Going Home!

When I get home...

I want to go to the park and play on the swings and slide.

I want to see my sister Sadie and my brother Jack and ride scooters in my backyard. I can ride as fast as Jack! But he didn't know how to ride when he first got it at Christmas. We all got scooters for Christmas, at the same time. They were waiting for us inside.

I'm going to sleep in my own bed, with my comfy weighted blanket. It has

moons on one side and is pink on the other side.

I'm going to play upstairs with my Calico Critters, which are little animals, and you can get a school or house for them. For my birthday, my mommy got me a house. Sadie's Calico Critters slept in my house, but that didn't go very good. It did go good for one night, though.

For breakfast, I want to eat mommy's pancakes. Two small and one big! When it's our birthdays, mommy makes us pancakes and we get to choose what color they are inside. And you can put lots and lots of sprinkles. And whatever your name starts with is the shape of the pancake. J for Jack was hard to do. S for Sadie was hard, too. But C for Charlotte was pretty easy.

Mostly, I'm excited to go home and play as much as I want!

*Charlotte, age 6*

### **Where I'd Like to Be Today**

I like to go to NASA. When I went on a school field trip there, we tried out virtual reality. It felt like you were in outer space and fell to the ground. You left a space ship, went around a little bit, and then went back in.

I tried out the astronaut ice cream and I hated it. My mom was one of the chaperones when I went, and she didn't like the ice cream either. The burgers and French fries there were good!

They had spaceships that looked real, but the people were fake, like mannequins.

The only bad thing was the bus ride there took two hours, but it wasn't too bad because there was a bathroom on the bus.

*Deegan, age 10 \*\**

### **My Best Friend Alison**

My best friend is Allison. She is 6 years old, like me. I sit beside her at lunch. We like to eat noodles with awesome sauce on them. We play at recess. We like to play tag and hide n seek. We take turns hiding and seeking.

One day we were playing hide n seek and Alison hid. I closed my eyes and counted to one hundred. When I opened my eyes, she wasn't there. I tried to find her. I looked behind the swings, but she wasn't there. I looked behind where I was counting, and she wasn't there! And then, I looked under slide and there she was!

I was happy I found her because now we could play tag. I was 'it' and tried to get her, but I couldn't. Then I was tired and took a break. Alison came and sat beside me. I tagged her.

"You're it!" I said and ran away.

She couldn't get me, and we had to continue tomorrow. The next day, I got her!

*Dunni, age 6 \**

### **WATER!**

I like to play with water and mud outside at my house. Me and my brothers dig holes and fill them with water. Then we jump and play in them.

Once we went to the beach. We made a hole in the sand. A wave was coming, and we said, "Dig, dig!" so the water wouldn't get inside the hole. But the water covered the hole, so we had to dig it again. And then the waves covered me too. Some of the water got in my mouth and ears and I said, "Ack, ack!" I tried not to step on the waves. I ran front. Then back. Then I was cutting the waves with my hands, but they wouldn't cut. It was fun.

One time it rained. The sound picked up the water and put it inside the clouds. And that made it rain. We were at my grandma's house. We were playing in the ditch, swimming. Then it started thundering and raining. My grandma took our picture and sent it to mom! Grandma Lucy is the best. She is nice.

*Dyland, age 6*

### **A Butterfly Named Esme**

This my butterfly. My mom let me use her phone. I looked up drawings on YouTube and it showed how to paint a butterfly. The paper was all white. I used three brushes, a thinner one for outlining in black and writing my name. The second brush was like a sponge and the third was for my name. The second brush was for the colorful parts. I like all the different colors the best. I

feel happy when I look at it.

*Esmeralda, age 11 \*\**

### **My Favorite Subject**

Doing art stuff is my favorite thing. I color and watercolor. I draw my family and butterflies. I do art at school and home and hang my art on the wall in both places. My favorite thing to draw is a giraffe. When I work with clay, I don't like having sticky fingers. I'm going to be in third grade art when school starts.



*Giselle, age 8 \*\**

### **What I Like to Do**

I draw people, but they look like cartoons. Mostly they look like anime. I used to have art class. Now I still draw a lot so I'm my own teacher. When I draw, I create something. I need imagination to make a character of my own. I try to draw boys, but sometimes I don't know the anatomy, so I usually stick to girls. I watch *Star vs. the Forces of Evil* for ideas. Sometimes I look at a character and change it to make it my own art.

*Gloria, age 11 \*\**

### **Unicorn Water Park**

I went to the water park. I got in waves and floated on a floatie that looked like a unicorn. The water was warm and cold. It was fun. But I needed to go safe.

*Jackeline, age 7*



## Ultimate Camping!

We went camping and it took four hours to get there. We went to Camp Sam Rayburn. We went to the lake and played on the lake toys. We climbed slides and jumped on the floating trampoline. There was a ball thing, where you held the handles and rocked back and forth to see who falls off first.

We went fishing and caught 11 perch. We used worms, and I put them on the hooks.

The best part was the 8-hour boat trip because we got to drive the boat. We also tied a float to the back, floated on it, and tried to knock each other off. And we went to a private beach and saw ladies on horses. They took the saddles off and walked the horses into the water. We got to pet the horses.

We also tied big rafts behind jet skis. We went really fast, and they tried to buck us off. It was a high-powered jet ski, so it knocked us off after 20 seconds. I skidded across the water so fast, like when you throw rocks and they jump across the water.

We cooked out, too. We had spaghetti, burgers and hot dogs, biscuits and gravy, pancakes and breakfast tacos, bacon and sausage.

We stayed there for two days. It was really fun. Then we packed our stuff and drove four hours back home.

*Jackson, age 10*

## My Make a Wish Trip to Disney

My family and I flew to Disney in Florida. It took two hours to get there.

We stayed in the village called Give Kids the World. We stayed in a condo that was really colorful. While we were there, we could ride ponies and have free ice cream. And there was a swimming pool.

I always slept until 11am, but then we played, played, played until midnight. We were there for seven days.

My favorite ride at Disney was the car one that made my mom scream.

The Soarin' ride was like flying over the world. My dad was scared so he didn't look down on the first scene.

Inside the Haunted Mansion, I saw a tombstone and many fake things moving around. I wanted to make it more fun and scary, so I scared my dad by poking him, and he jumped!

There was a good restaurant in Animal Kingdom called Yak & Yeti.

There was something very special there to eat, and my daddy drank some Japanese Sake.

It was raining while we were there. Bam. Bam. Bam. But we still saw fireworks at the Magic Castle.

*Jerry, age 10*

### **Cancer**

I have cancer.

It is Neuroblastoma.

I had surgery to remove the tumor.

It's gone.

Now I have chemo.

Then I sing Elton John's song

"I'm Still Standing!"

*Jonas, age 4*

### **Card Games**

I like to play games.

My favorites are Crazy 8's and Go Fish.

I like to play with DiDi, my grandma.

In Crazy 8's, my favorite card is the orange 8 with the monkey on it.

Orange is my favorite color!

DiDi has to deal me that card every time.

Sometimes I get 6 cards, so I am sure to get the monkey.

There are special rules.

You get a special toy when you win.

I

also like to play Old Maid and Slap Jack and Memory and Matching.

*Jonas, age 4*

### **4<sup>th</sup> of July**

I came prepared for 4<sup>th</sup> of July. My shirt has a heart with 4<sup>th</sup> of July colors of blue, red, and white. My shorts do, too.

And I came with 4<sup>th</sup> of July tattoos. You can put them on your face or arm. You get a wet rag, dab it, hold it for a minute, then it sticks to your face or arm.

*Jordyn, age 6*

### **Toys are My Dream**

Toys are my dream.

My toy room was a big mess until mommy cleaned it.

I mess it up. Mommy cleans it.

We'll see how long it lasts this time.

I love toys from Target, but the store by me closed in the flood.

They took down the signs and everything.

I love toys. You can never have too many.

I wish I could live in Toys'R'Us.

Toys are my dream.

*Jordyn, age 6*

### **The Best Family**

I have four brothers and one sister. I'm the youngest. The oldest is twenty-eight. I was an uncle when I was six! It's fun being in a big family. If you're in a little family, you mostly don't have anyone to talk to or play with.

My favorite thing to do with my family is to go out somewhere fun after church. If we go out to eat, my favorite food is cheese enchiladas. Sometimes we invite my grandpa and family, so we need two tables or more put together. On my birthday, we get together to eat my Mom's strawberry cake. My family is the best.

*Jose, age 11 \*\**

## My Fun Birthday!

I went to Chuck E. Cheese for my birthday. My dad came to my party. And I had all my cousins and my nannie too. We had some cheese and pepperoni pizza. I had the cheese pizza. We played some games there, too, like Batman and No Deal.

We had some vanilla cake decorated like a Troll. My favorite colors on the cake were purple and some pink. Everyone sang “Happy Birthday” to me. My mom put some cake on my face, so I put some on my daddy.

I opened presents and my favorite gift was sidewalk chalk. I got a ballerina costume, some colors and coloring books, and a black Barbie doll. And even more toys. My mom let me play with them.

Then I went swimming with my cousins. The water was warm, and we swam. My cousins put me under the water. It was fun. I went home when my mom picked me up.

My friend had a birthday, too. She had a water slide and some friends came over. We slid down the slide. We slid down a lot. They spent the night with us. We had a slumber party and went to sleep.

I turned 8 years old on July 13. It was a fun birthday.

*Klajia, age 8*

## My Pets

I have a lot of pets.

I have nine fish. Two are named Zip and Zap. They are black and white and have huge bellies. They are Dalmatian Mollies.

I have a dog named Carlos. He is wheat-colored with pointy ears.

He’s medium size, which is in the middle of big and little. When we walk in the door, he always jumps on us because he’s happy to see us.

I have a hermit crab. I haven’t been around him much because we just got him yesterday. And we still haven’t named him. Right now he’s the hermit crab with no name, but I call him Crabby.

And I have a goat named Clover. He's a brown and white Paint Goat. His feet are brown-tipped. Actually, we've had two goats.

When Sissie goes off to college, I'm getting a cat and a Bearded Dragon.

I have a lot of pets. Way too many, and they keep coming.

*Layla, age 8*

### **The Most Important Thing**

The most important thing about me is my pet fish.

I have two fish named Zip and Zap.

They go to the top of the tank and look for food when I'm at my dad's.

They rush to the top to eat. They're always hungry, I don't know why.

They had 8 babies. Wait, they had nine because there is a new baby!

But the most important thing about me is my pet fish!

*Layla, age 8*

### **I'm Turning Seven!**

It's almost my birthday. I'm turning seven! I'm going to Chuck E. Cheese with my two big brothers and my little baby brother and my mom and dad.

I want to play with the games. I want to get pepperoni pizza. And I want to get tickets after I win and get a surprise. I want to have red balloons and a rainbow piñata. I want to have chocolate birthday cake with candles. But I'm nervous about them singing "Happy Birthday" to me, because people see me. It will be a fun day. When we're done, we'll go my mom's house.

*Miranda, age 6, almost 7*

### **My Flower Necklace**

I made a flower necklace. It has purple flowers that smell like watermelon.

I used a string and put 11 flowers on it. Then I tied the end. I put the necklace on my hands and over my head. I felt happy because it matches my new bracelet.

*Miranda, age 6*

### My New Brother Mateo

I have a new baby brother named Mateo. I'm nervous because he's so new. My mom said that I could take care of him and hold him. He loves to eat! In the night he cries because he's hungry, so my mom gives him milk. He's cute! Yesterday, he was sleeping so much! I wanted him to wake up, but he didn't want to. He just kept sleeping.



Today, we're going to have a surprise party for my mom and Mateo. We'll have balloons and everything. And it's my big brother's birthday too. So we'll have a chocolate and strawberry cake for him.

*Miranda, age 6*

### Two Beautiful Dogs

I have two dogs. One is named Checkers because he's black and white. He's a Morkie, a Maltese with some Yorkie. The other one is named Peaches because she's cute, fuzzy, and usually sweet. Sometimes Peaches is sour if she's skittish. She's a Yorkie.

This is how they make me laugh. Peaches stares at me all the time. Checkers hops like a bunny when the grass is taller than his head. I pick up Checkers and rub his belly on my bed.

Peaches doesn't like to be held. She's learning to trust people, but Checkers has trusted people all his life. I love them so much.

*Molly, age 8 \*\**

### My 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday

Last week, I turned 6 on my birthday.

We played and ate vanilla cake.

My family and friends sang "Happy Birthday" to me.

And I opened presents. My favorite was a purple dog that feels squishy.

I was so happy!

*Nathaly, age 6*

### **The Summer Party**

In summer, I like to go to a party  
And play with my friends  
And play dodge  
And eat eggs and cupcakes  
And say, "It's so fun!"

*Nathaly, age 6*

### **4<sup>th</sup> of July**

On 4<sup>th</sup> of July, I go outside and see my friends.  
We shoot off fireworks in my neighborhood.  
Neighbors bring food to share at a picnic.  
Sometimes the kids get in a line and run around in circles around the block.  
I run around with my friends and scream and yell.  
Last year, I wore red, white, and blue.  
I think I'll wear those colors again this year.

*Rowan, age 9*

### **Disney World**

This summer I went to Disney World. My favorite ride out of all the parks is a roller coaster called Thunder Mountain. It is really fast. Whenever it turns, it tilts. My stomach feels like it is flipping, and it feels like I am going to fall out. At one part, it spins in a circle while it is tilting. It is fun!

*Rowan, age 9*

### **Crafty Tessa**

I am magical unicorn Tessa, the most creative girl in the world.  
I made a heart frame where you can stick your face through to take a picture.  
One side I made a unicorn with a horn and curly hair.  
The other side is a bear with whiskers and poms poms for ears.

*Tessa, age 7*

## Going Home!

I'm leaving the hospital. Well, I'm not going home, I'm going to an apartment. I will get a parade of nurses and doctors! Sometimes, they wear Mickey Mouse ears and stuff. And I will walk down a red carpet.

I just got done with my pill class. Those people made me a bit mad. They kept saying, "Just do it. Just do it."

I said, "I can't!"

But they kept on saying that! So I took my medicines. Now I don't have the pump I named Napoleon. I just have my Hickman or central lines.

Now I can jump off my bed and go to the bathroom by myself. But I'll still come back to get my labs drawn. So I'll still get to play with volunteers, but maybe only for one minute!

Today, I feel good! The best part is that I get to enjoy the hot air. I love summer and I've been missing it. And I really want to go to school. 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

*Tessa, age 7*

## How to Draw a Unicorn

Turn your paper the long way up.

Draw a huge circle.

Then add a pointed horn on the top.

Color the horn with stripes.

Now, you draw two ears.

Next, draw unicorn eyes.

Then, draw a heart for the nose with a line down to her mouth.

Do a little swirl across her face for her hair.

Color it any way you want.

You can tear the paper off the crayon if you want to.

You can always start over if you mess up!

*Tessa, age 7*

### Recipe for Making a Flip-a-Roo

Take a light brown color, spin your finger on the tip to get all the dust off.

Make the bear's feet. Two circle feet.

Grab a black crayon and make a little loop. Color it in.

Make two little circles. Color them in with black.

Next draw the bear's tummy, in a rainbow shape.

Color it in with brown.

Then draw a circle for the bear's head.

Then draw the nose. Draw a triangle and two little lumps.

Then draw the bear's eyes. Make them black circles.

Then draw some pink cheeks.

Now draw two hands so he can hold a blueberry cupcake

with a cherry on top, of course!

What else would bears expect!

*Tessa, age 7*

### The Flying Fish!

I was drawing a cat, but I messed up and turned it into a fish.

It has rainbow skin, scales that feel hard and slimy. It jumps out and flies out of the ocean.

Once I felt a real fish. It was raw. Never touch a fish fin. They are sharp.

Only touch its scales.

*Tessa, age 7*

**ADOLESCENT &  
YOUNG ADULT  
WRITING**

Ages 13+

# POETRY

## I Am From

I am from playing defense in basketball,  
from Nike workout clothes,  
and from sugary sweet blue and green snow cones.

I am from spending time with family,  
from doing activities, like going to Jumping World,  
and from hot, sweaty picnics.

I am from the cold, wintery white Christmas,  
from giving presents, like monster trucks to my favorite person,  
my brother Cameron,  
and from eating hot steamy ham just out of the oven.

I am from hearing laughter from the jokes I create,  
from birds chirping when I was out camping,  
and from seagulls on the beach in South Padre Island.

I am from fun activities. That's just me!

*Aliah, age 16*

## Alyssa's Life

***(after the book Life by Cynthia Rylant)***

Life begins big  
Even for monkeys.  
They learn how to hang on trees  
Beneath the sun  
And the sky.

Life grows.  
Ask any elephant.

What do you love about life?

My sister will say candy and clothes.  
My brother will say video games.  
My mom will say perfume.

Life is not always easy.  
There will probably be a stretch of horrible days  
Now and then,  
But they will eventually end  
And there is always a new opportunity.

Remember this:  
In every corner of the world,  
There is something to love  
And something to protect.

And if one day,  
It seems nothing beautiful  
Will ever come your way again,  
Trust the monkeys  
And elephants that cross your path.  
Trust my sister and my brother  
And my mom who always find their way back home,

All these know something about life:  
That everything is changing  
And it is worth  
Waking up in the morning  
To see what might happen  
Because life begins big  
And grows.

*Alyssa, age 14 \*\**

### **Saudi Arabia**

I miss my grandma, whom I haven't seen in a long time.  
I miss the yogurt, flat Arabic bread, beans with onion and tomato, and hum-

mus with olive oil.

I miss my bird, a gray and white parrot named Sugar.

I miss going into the desert every Friday by camel or horse, where we cook rice and meat on an open fire and make Arabic coffee and tea.

I miss the carriages of ice cream and corn for sale.

I miss my home, my bedroom.

I miss all things about my best friend, Fajer.

I miss the log cabin on my aunt's farm, where she also has chicken, sheep, and camels.

*Danah, age 14*

### **A Musician's Point of View**

When I play tympani, kettle drums,

I listen to the whole band's sound,

The perfect music

When we all play together.

It's fun to play,

Like building something big.

A lot of people watch,

Pay attention to the musicians,

Every movement that we do.

They listen and enjoy the music.

The sounds are yellow and orange

As I play softly.

Sometimes I end it

rolling up to a bigger sound

And then stopping,

A crescendo.

*Donovan, age 14 \*\**

### **Eden's Life**

***(after the book Life by Cynthia Rylant)***

Life begins weird

Especially for a tadpole  
That changes to a frog  
Beneath the water  
and the sky.

Life grows.  
Ask any lily.

What do you love about life?  
The Yorkshire terrier will say chasing squirrels.  
The housecats will say doing nothing.  
The goldfish will say humans with fish food.

Life is not always easy.  
There will probably be a stretch when you lose someone  
Now and then,  
But sadness will eventually end  
And there is always a new day.

Remember this:  
In every corner of the world,  
There is something to love  
And something to protect.

And if one day,  
It seems nothing beautiful  
Will ever come your way again,  
Trust in God  
And hold onto family that crosses your path.

Trust my dog when he runs away  
And always finds his way back home,  
Where he scratches on the door.

All these know something about life:  
That everything is changing

And it is worth  
Waking up in the morning  
To see what might happen  
Because life begins in strange ways  
And grows.

*Eden, age 17 \*\**

### **Hofius Hawks**

I play for my school.  
When I serve the ball,  
It feels great to get it over the net.  
My hand goes *think*  
Against the leather ball.  
Then I've got to be ready  
For the ball to come back.

You got to listen to the coach  
To be sure you're switching off right,  
Rotating to your position.  
It reminds me of the movement  
Of the waves against our feet at the beach.  
The gym smells like sweat  
And the new smell of our jerseys.

The crowd goes silent,  
Waiting for the ball to go over.  
Once you get the rally going,  
The crowd cheers you on.  
Teammates pound their chairs, chant.  
We play our best  
And hope for the rest.

*Genesis, age 13 \*\**

### Living the Life of Where I'm From

Where I'm from feels like I'm loved when my grandma cooks.

Where I'm from sounds like cousins laughing  
and eating on Thanksgiving.

My home is filled with the sound of my dad talking loudly  
and making us laugh.

My home is covered in my mom's cooking of salad and pork chops.

Where I'm from you are told, "You can do it! Go JT!"

I breathe in the inspiring movie *The Hate You Give* that shows you matter, and  
you can be who you want.

I breathe out my baby sister Ivy.

I am my sister's replica.

Where I'm from feels like playing in the WNBA.

*Jajah, age 13*

### Transformation

Life is kinda short.

Lately my life has been positive--

less visits at the hospital,

traveling a lot more for fun,

spending more time with my boyfriend,

more healthy and fit,

shopping more.

A lot has changed lately.

I feel normal!

Life changed

from the first time

I came to the hospital.

Getting sick helped me

slow down and develop

a closer relationship to my mother

and myself.

Going through this

gave me perspective.  
I'm more patient with others  
and myself.  
Now I feel like a normal kid!

I've always had a lot  
of wisdom.  
But I feel like I've learned  
a lot more.  
And accept what life brings  
to the table.

*Jazmyn, age 17*

### **Eight Ways of Looking at Raindrops**

It falls to the side  
in a diagonal  
when it's raining hard.

It falls straight down  
falling fast  
in a slow steady rain.

It's clear  
like glass  
reflecting the rain.

It's smells like  
water  
feeding the roots and soil.

It's wet,  
soaking everything.

It's fresh  
so people can drink it



I am from hanging out with my friends,  
    who always want to be around me,  
from being with family, spending time together,  
    and opening presents on Christmas,  
and from being told I look a lot healthier now—  
    the best thing anyone could ever tell me.

I am from having no hair to having all my hair grow back—  
    one indication of how healthy I'm getting,  
from spending less time in the hospital and going into remission,  
and from having cancer cells in my spine to having none.

I am from my illness that taught me to appreciate things in life  
    and showed me how strong I am,  
from keeping a smile on my face and helping other people smile,  
    and from the dream of becoming a nurse to help everybody.

The nurses here are excellent, and I want to be like that.

*Jesse, age 19*

### **Sad and Lost**

When you feel sad and lost  
You easily cry, frown and hunch  
You suddenly feel gone  
Yet the perfect solution is always God.

When you feel sad and lost  
There's no sound, nor movement  
You feel like the world around you stops  
But dark colors and grief pop out  
And everything seems to turn upside down  
Yet there is no reason to give up, no matter what.

When you feel sad or lost  
Focus on God

He will always open doors  
That will lead you back to joy.

*Katrina, age 19*

### Summer H2O

Summer — live;  
it's hot, and that's cool,  
and it's cool, 'cuz it's hot.

To sit in nature shaded by woody trees  
eating a juicy peach —  
it feels more free than camping.

It's full of surprises like parties,  
(maybe I'll conversate with a few nice girls),  
and gaming sleepovers with my squad from school.

No school means no homework,  
No school means no classes and no bells,  
No school means more Netflix.

A time to relax.

A time to get loud.

A time to chill until the next school year.

*Kevin, age 14 \**

### Mofe

I am from the meaning of my name —  
*I want God's own,*  
and from different cultures in Nigeria,  
where everyone comes together as one.

I am from overcoming sickness and crisis  
of Sickle Cell and the bravery of not letting  
my disease stop me from doing things I love  
and what my mates can do.

I am from my dad's sacrifice of giving up the money

meant to treat himself, instead using it to bring my family here for a better life, and from being the daughter of a cancer survivor — my mom.

I am from a strong family of five strong females!

*Mofetioluwa, age 16*

### **My Name**

My name is the color scarlet, like strawberries.

My name is the lucky number 21, the day of my birthday.

My name is the sound of the fan that helps me get to sleep.

My name is the smell of seafood gumbo that my grandma makes.

My name means crown, like ownership and standing your ground.

My name is the memory of my 13<sup>th</sup> birthday when I got to see my friends and family instead of being in the hospital.

*Tajah, age 13*

## **FICTION**

### **Horse**

I like animals. I go to the rodeo each year. It would be cool if I could do Barrel Racing in the rodeo. If I had a horse, he'd be a muscular, black mustang

named Cash. I'd braid his mane.

The gates would open and we'd run for the first barrel. We'd run around four or five, hoping for the best forms and times. Maybe we'd win a lot of cash, but I'd have fun even if we didn't.

*Alyssa, age 14 \*\**

### **If I Could Talk to Anyone...**

...it would be my bunny rabbits. My rabbits are both girls, best friends. I would ask them if they like me or like their cage. If they don't, I can make them one they like.

I designed their cage. It's a big one, like a dog playpen. It has two shelves for them to climb on and a blanket for them to lie on. I think they like their cage, but they would like more high areas to climb up.

They wouldn't want me to hold them. Rabbits don't like being held, but I do it anyway. Their names are Charlotte and Emerson. I'm a bunny mom.

*Caroline, age 14 \*\**

### **The Man vs. Mouse**

One day, at nighttime, a man was angry and mad because he saw something crawling underneath the rug. So he tore up the house trying to catch it. He lifted up one big chair, but he didn't catch the thing. So he thought it wasn't fair. His hair was sticking up because he was so angry. And he was really mad because it sucked. Then he saw something moving under the rug again, and that made him mad. Since he didn't get it the first time, he kept on trying and never gave up.

He thought of ideas to catch the creature. He tried so hard to catch what was under the rug. He tried to trap it. He tried to hit it. But it was too fast, so he was so mad.

Then the animal crawled again and knocked down the table. The lamp fell too and broke, so the light turned off. It was so dark that the guy was blind and couldn't see. He tried so hard to catch it that he couldn't breathe anymore. He never caught the creature.

Two weeks later, the creature came back again! It was under the rug again. He was mad because he thought the animal had gone away. He turned so red and he never went to bed. He tried and tried, but he never caught it. It was like a race, but different because he was chasing it. He thought it was a mouse, so he put cheese down at every corner. And some traps.

The creature came back again two days later. The trap caught it! The guy felt so bad and ashamed because the animal was crying because it was trapped. It was a mouse. So he picked up the trap, opened the door, let the mouse go, and all his pain went away. So now the house is safe.

*James, age 16*

### Pursuit of Happiness

The Potato Eaters don't look wealthy, but they still look like they're living life. Eating small loaves of bread, they eat together as a family. It reminds me of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* where everyone lives together as a family. The family doesn't think that it's the end for them because they're poor. It looks like they don't really care about wealth. They are happy because two people have smiles on their faces. Pursuit of happiness is a strong thing.

*Jamian, age 13 \*\**

## NONFICTION

### Friday

Unfortunately, I didn't get much sleep last night.

Fortunately, I woke up and made it to my appointment on time.

Unfortunately, I'm going to have to come back often for medical appointments.

Fortunately, they're helping.

Unfortunately, I arrived early.

Fortunately, I get to see *Thor: Ragnarok*: I'm a big fan of the Marvel series.

Unfortunately, I'm leaving soon.

Fortunately, maybe I can see it when I come back.

Fortunately, I can go home and go back to bed.

*Amira, age 16 \*\**

### **Having Support**

It's scary, but with physical and emotional support from family and friends it's easier to be in the hospital. I've been in and out of the hospital, but I have people to help me. My family reminds me that they are there for me, that I'm strong and can get through it. My friends post on my timeline on Facebook and come to visit. The pastor from church messaged me and said that he's rooting for me to get better. Even my ex-boyfriend, who is engaged to someone else, called. No matter what the obstacle, I've learned you're strong enough to get through it.

*Aubrey, age 18 \*\**

### **See the Good**

My advice to people is to not give up, to use perseverance because there's always a bright side to the hardship. When I went through septic shock, I learned that life is too short to look at everything in a negative form. Going through two weeks in the hospital, one in ICU and one in recovery, I learned that God has a plan for everyone, but we don't know what the plan is. After that, I decided to be the happy goofy kid who looks on the bright side and bring joy and hope to others.

*Christian, age 16 \*\**

### **Future Farmers of America**

FFA is not just about being a farmer. It's about leadership and getting to work together with other teens. I like being in FFA because everyone is super nice and has the same interests.

I'm on a team called Horse Judging and I work with people on that team. We sit in the stands at an arena at horse shows. There are a bunch of different classes with multiple horses in each class. Judges place their classes a certain way and don't tell the students how they place the class. We also judge the class and place it a certain way. At the end of the competition, we turn in our scantrons. Whoever is closest to the judge's placement will win a certain prize like a belt buckle, ribbon, plaque, and sometimes money. There's also a team aspect. Whatever team has the highest placing students will also win

prizes like banners.

Someday I want to raise rabbits through FFA, but my parents say I have to wait until I can drive.

*Kelsey, age 14 \*\**

### Visits with Cohen and Briggs

Cohen is a super fluffy dog and a happy boy. He slept right through a baseball player's visit, lots of people doing crafts in the playroom—a lot of commotion. He licked my hands when I petted him, and he put his paw on my leg.

The service dog that visited me in my room yesterday is named Briggs. He's an Irish Setter, but he's darker with some red in his coat. He pounced on my bed and he was a character. Very dramatic! When I petted him, he relaxed like it was so nice.

I have a dog at home, but he's not as calm as Cohen or as dramatic as Briggs. He can't visit me in the hospital, but the service dogs can!

*Lilia, age 17 \*\**

### The Interview

I was really nervous because it was my first time to be interviewed. They put lights on me, so bright, and they put a microphone on me to record what I said. I was so nervous that I was forgetting stuff to say. They asked me questions and my answers were not complete, and I said, "Oh, I forgot to say this thing" or "Oh, that was not the right date."

But I really liked the interview because the person interviewing me was really nice and sweet. And she made me feel comfortable.

It was my first time to be interviewed. It will be on the news. I feel excited for people to see it because of my message that will go to other people. My message is: **Never Give Up.**

*Maria, age 18*

## Meet Mia!

Mia has short curly hair that is dark brown like dark chocolate, and she is kind when she smiles. She is athletic and plays basketball, and she is good at shooting the ball into the basket. Mia is most proud of learning to play basketball and most afraid snakes because they can be dangerous. Her talent is doing handstands in gymnastics. Her favorite food is pasta Alfredo that her mom makes. Mia likes the color blue, like the sky, and she loves the movie “Five Feet Apart” where two people fall in love. Her imagination is like the waves at the beach. In the future, she hopes to travel around the world.

*Mia, age 13*

## Spill Your Mind on the Paper

At first, I kept my sketch books to myself. Now I am the Art Kid.

You don't have to compare yourself to someone else. What will you create today? The process is hard to describe, but it is an old procedure imprinted in my head that I will now help you spill onto the paper:

### **Start with a structure:**

You can base it off your friends or even random people in public.

Look around you and see what you can find: a tall, lanky guy, a short girl, a chubby little man... What is their past? What is their future? What are they wearing? Don't forget about emotion. Think about opposites: If you choose a tall lanky guy with broad shoulders and head centered towards his chest you wouldn't expect he could have a shy attitude held in from others. For example, because of Buddy, my grandparents Dog, I love the concept of gentle giants.

### **Pencil first:**

Grab pencil and paper and let your mind spill out! Put yourself somewhere else. Remember to do it for you, connect it to you. It's not always about lots of amazing details, it matters more about what you want to show.

### **Ink it out:**

It's a blueprint, the backbone, the stamp of approval.

The frame for everything to stay in balance and the protector of your idea.

Don't be afraid to take risks with it.

You are the creator!

### **Erase foundation:**

You know the pencil lines will disappear, but they were useful as the structure. Make space for the viewer to connect to it, too.

Even a circle can be inspiring to somebody who couldn't draw one as well as you can.

**Add the color:**

Watercolors mix on their own and flow out as there are many ideas contributing to one piece of paper. They guide you what to do next on the paper. The color helps balance out the paper on its own. A piece of you is a part of them. Follow the character where ever it goes...

*Nicholas, age 15 \**

**Where I'd Rather Be Today**

I flew here from Chicago where I'm a mechanical engineer intern for a metal fabricator. Today I'd love to be at home doing something with my family and visiting with friends. With family, I like going out to eat at Whataburger, Chuy's for Mexican, and barbecue. My dad and I also like to watch sports, anything that's in season. If I had to pick a favorite sport, I'd pick college football. I don't get to see my friends around here too much. Some of them are out of the country over the summer.

In Chicago, I have three cousins and an uncle so I can spend time with family there too. In June I saw a Cubs game at Wrigley Field. Later this summer, I'll see a Bear's pre-season game at Soldier Field. It's fun to be in the city. It's easy to get around on mass transit; I don't have to drive everywhere.

*Nicholas, age 20 \*\**

**All Right!**

I like to watch Bill Gaither on my iPad. It is a gospel music group. They sing about Jesus. It makes me feel good when I hear it. All-right!

I got to go to camps in the summer. They play music there. I meet other kids there. We go swimming and sing too. People like me because I'm happy all the time. All-right!

*Paul, age 17 \*\**

**New Places and New Faces**

A little under a month from today, I start classes at University of Houston. I got an Associates of Arts from Lone Star in a little over two years, and now I'm

going for a Bachelor's in Computer Science. For the first time, I'll be living away from home in a dorm on campus. I'm a little nervous, honestly, and it will probably be hard to sleep the first night, but I'm excited too.

I've been down to the campus a few times and I really do like it. The students were very diverse. I'm looking forward to meeting all kinds of people there. I don't know who my three roommates will be, but I'll see.

It will be a lot different from going from middle school to high school because you usually move with the same people. At college, there are so many new people to meet, a bigger scale with people coming from all over the world.

U. of H. has a student center with a bowling alley, and I like to bowl. There are an arcade and pool tables. They also have a recreation center with pools which I'll try at least once. There's basketball there.

I feel well-prepared. I'm taking Intro to Meteorology because I've always been a weather geek, so that's a class I'll enjoy. Second semester I'll try to intern at KRBE. I went to their summer program in June 2014, and they very much expressed an interest in having me come back as a college intern. Lots of new faces in new places.

*Robert, age 21 \*\**

# THE SPLENDID REVIEW

The Splendid Review is an anthology of poems, short stories and autobiographies written by the talented young writers at Texas Children's Cancer and Hematology Centers each week. In collaboration with Writers in the Schools, The Periwinkle Foundation unites professional writers with children and families battling cancer and blood disorders in the outpatient clinic and Bone Marrow Transplant Unite to share their stories. Through arts and creative writing programs, The Periwinkle Foundation celebrates self-expression and empowerment as a vital part of the healing process.

The Periwinkle Foundation develops and provides programs that positively change the lives of children, young adults and families who are challenged by cancer and other life-threatening illnesses and are cared for at Texas Children's Hospital.



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