

# English II Pieces

## 2004-2005

### A Childhood Treasure Chest

by Kaitlin Crawford

Beneath the lid of a small antique wooden box lay a collection of small trinkets, things that a small child would collect: a sand flower, a crystal, a shell with gold-colored wire carefully wrapped around the edges, a triangle-shaped rock, a moon rock, and a 1978 penny. These small miscellaneous objects remind Melissa of her youth and her family: "it reminds me of my childhood because, back then, I thought everything was interesting to the smallest detail." Throughout her childhood, she collected these objects. "I thought they were neat and mysterious," she explained.

She described how she had acquired these objects, starting with the moon rock: "My grandma gave it to me when I was little. It reminds me of her and when she lived in Orofino in the countryside. When I visited, I used to play with her dog, Dixie. She was an old dog; she was alive when my mother was young. She was the protective family dog." Melissa always wanted to be like her grandmother, who wrapped stones with metal. The shell in Mel's box is an attempt to recreate her grandmother's art. The 1978 penny was originally part of a collection of pennies that she was saving to go to the fair with her childhood crush. She kept only one: "I thought it was the oldest one when I found it."

The antique box was originally Melissa's great-grandmother's; it was passed down through the generations. After Melissa had put the precious box on her bed one day, her little brother jumped on the mattress, knocking the box to the floor. "The leg was broken forever," Melissa said. "I was mad." Melissa's antique box full of treasures is a symbol of her childhood and of the people who affected her life.

### Unwanted

by Kaitlin Crawford

As Summer sets,  
Luna rises; Day  
trips, falling into dusk.  
Unprotected Autumn twilight  
shyly blooms a rusted hue,  
no longer confined within a heavy veil;  
vanity of Summer's charm.  
Fall lies shaded by  
Winter's envy; an eclipse, covering  
Autumn's spotlight.

As Winter waxes,  
the Sun, less social,  
hides behind a seasonal mask.  
Popular Moon appears in the sky,  
followed by duckling stars.  
Outcast from winter nocturne,  
the sun's arrival is ostracized  
by Moon and Stars.  
Sun awaits the change of seasons:  
daytime accompanied by  
friendly summer.

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### Children Voting?

by Melissa Dammerman

Imagine an election year in which teens were just as important to the electoral process as upper-class businessmen. Campaign platforms become meccas of fashion, music, and the hottest trends in technology. Celebrity endorsements carry political weight. Each presidential candidate vies for the most sensational headline: "Snoop Dogg scoops the White House." What if teenagers could vote?

Teens in my circle of friends and others' acquaintances have no interest in political events. While riding the bus to school, I overheard a student commenting on Bush's Inaugural Address: "My God, I don't understand how my parents could watch that crap, it's so freaking boring, he like talks in a monotone." Her friend agreed, saying, "Yeah, if they were more interesting and not so boring I

## Fall

by Melissa Dammerman

Crunch, Snap.  
Dead leaves, twigs, crack  
beneath my feet:  
echoes dance across deserted woods.  
Wind whistles in the distance,  
rustling golden aspens, rousing them from quiet slumber.  
Geese overhead  
honk summer's adieu.  
Invigorating grass slowly withers  
under frost-blanketed soil.  
Summer's glory drifts like a feather  
caught in light breezes;  
Winter's sleep soon to come.

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## An Espresso Affair

by Kaitlin Crawford

Mountain Java, a local café in McCall, is a pleasant oasis for its customers, but even more so for its employees. Chris Lott has been working there for eight years. "Before I came to McCall, I was a social worker at a juvenile hall. When I first came here, I wanted to find a job at a small coffee shop by the lake for a few months before I found another social working job. That was eight years ago, and I've been here ever since."

There is a warm atmosphere in the espresso shop; fresh smells from coffee and pleasing sounds from a gentle music box add to its charm. The women who work there are known for their amiability, so it is easy to see why Chris is so attracted to her job: "What makes my job interesting is meeting new people." Some of the first people she met were the other employees at Mountain Java, including Esther Mulnick, who was Chris's trainer. Soon she would meet other interesting people in the community.

"There was one man," Chris said, "that we would call Bear Claw Man, because he always wore a necklace with big bear claws on it. One time he came in and ordered a drink. I put it on the counter for him, and he took out a huge knife and slammed it into the cup. He said, 'Did that scare you?' I was trying to be tough, so I said [jokingly], 'I've taken down kids with bigger knives than that!' Another time, a woman would do exercises in the morning to wake up, so she laid down on the floor and did

wouldn't fall asleep two minutes into his speech."

In order to gain votes, a candidate must appeal to the masses. However, if teenagers were added to the equation, a candidate's campaign would have to be altered in order to capture the interest of teenage voters. The majority of American teenagers do not have the attention span necessary to sit and listen to endless speeches that do not directly affect them. As a result, celebrity "special" appearances and musical guests would be necessary to engage and sway the teenage mind. At lunch, students talk mostly of celebrities, famous actors, models, or musicians who capture teens' interest. One student said, "Jessica Simpson has such pretty hair; I absolutely like love her voice, and to top that, she has a gorgeous husband. I would do anything to have her life." In order to win any election, a candidate would first have to win the favor of celebrities in order to appeal to youths' interests. As the youth of today are the adults of tomorrow, even without the teen vote, celebrities have persuasive power to change the tide and outcome of future presidential elections.

In my morning Geometry class, I overheard two male students chatting over current political events: "So, what did you think of the debate last Wednesday? I think Bush lost; he never backed up his points and all he could do was try to bash on Kerry," one said. The other student disagreed, saying, "Yeah, but all Kerry does is make a bunch of promises, he never tells us how he is going to make them happen; Kerry is just making up crap so he can win." Youth *do* debate political issues; they also have opinions on significant matters such as how to fix America's rising obesity level. My peers always say, "If fast food restaurants would just make their food contain less carbs, then people wouldn't be so fat." Teens do care about the affairs of America.

If teens had the vote, election year would be more than an endless stream of debates over war, politics, and the economy. Perhaps we as a nation would see a change in the welfare, safety, and education of our youth. At the very least, the "serious" issues of who's being nominated for the Grammy's and who's wearing what where would make the headlines. After all, who doesn't want younger-looking skin and a body by Victoria? For a better, more beautiful America, give teens the vote!

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her exercises right in the shop."

Another interesting aspect of Chris's job is making coffees, teas, and other drinks. "My favorite kind of drink to make is the cappuccino," she said, "because it is more challenging than the other drinks. Sometimes I make drinks after candy bars, like if someone comes in and says, 'I'll have a Heath,' I have to stop and think about what flavors are in a Heath bar."

Talking to Chris made it seem like the whole staff was being interviewed that day. Jenny Brown and Esther included themselves in the conversation and added funny anecdotes. Chris discussed various problems that she might encounter on the job, saying, "Sometimes we have difficult customers, but mostly the problems are the equipment breaking." From the background, Esther chimed, "Tell about the time when Rhiannon broke the coffee grinder!" Chris subsequently said, "One time when Rhiannon MacGlathery was working, the coffee grinder broke. She called over to Mountain Monkey Business and said to John, 'The grinder died.' He misheard her and thought she had said, 'My grandpa died.' John told her to leave, thinking she was in a family emergency."

Rhiannon thought she was in big trouble. John came to take over for her, but he didn't know how to run the shop. Nikki Humphery came in --she is a friend who doesn't work here --and John made her come back and help him make the drinks. Neither of them knew what they were doing. At one point, Rhiannon came back to see if she should keep working, but John told her to leave again. It was a disaster."

Interacting with so many people brings a lot of gossip, but not about people or their issues. "You hear the kinds of things like if Ponderosa is groomed or not. It's more like an info center," Chris said. It is an information center in another sense, too: "When the outdoor ice-rink was open, the kids would always come by to use the telephone." The closing of the rink didn't affect business, even though the winter is generally less busy than the summer. "At least people are good tipplers," she said.

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## **The Bee Impediment**

by Kaitlin Crawford

Black, yellow,  
stinger surely seeking flesh  
awaits, protecting a liquid oasis.  
Intruder: her longing eyes,  
fearful, like those of  
foreseeing prey.  
Theory of an imminent  
*sting!*  
delays her impulse toward  
a quenching theft. Boldly,  
reaching for sweet liquid,  
shooing small predators  
as she grasps the water jug nozzle.  
A release --thirst-smothering liquid--  
worth the price  
of a bee sting.

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## **800 Meter Relay**

by Kaitlin Crawford

Poised behind set starting blocks,  
First Runner waits the command.  
An official voice speaks, "On your mark,"  
She walks forward, baton in hand.

Kneeling, her spiked shoes find blocks,  
position on the track,  
preparing her body and her mind  
for the race to lead the pack.

"Set!" She poises, body tense,  
raised is a loaded gun.  
Still silence, then the fire shot,  
a sharp signal to run.

Exploding from the starting line,  
leaning in the turn,  
she curves into the straightaway:  
last hundred-meter burn.

Runner Two eyes First Runner's approach  
crouched low, Two counts One's pace.  
When One's distance equals fifteen steps,  
Two runs from first leg chase.

Matching the speed of the tired approach,

Two's teammate cries out, "Hand!"  
As Two extends her arm to the limit,  
in her fingers the baton does land.

Seeing the crowd around the bend,  
Two accelerates to maximum speed.  
One thought running through her mind:  
the gold medal is her need.

Slowly dying, she pushes hard.  
The receiving leg is near.  
The possibility of a poor handoff  
is her only fear.

Yelling her signal, extending her arm,  
she completes a smooth exchange.  
Watching her teammate accelerate,  
no longer in close range.

Third leg passes runners on the track  
with second lane advantage.  
Her only goal creating a lead, she  
apparently can manage.

As the baton is handed off,  
fourth leg begins her dash.  
Neck and neck with persistent opponent,  
hoping the competition will crash.

Almost to the finish line,  
her determination sets in.  
she passes her opposition,  
yet unsure if she will win.

Four leans across the finish line  
Knowing she has won.  
Team goal achieved, completed,  
done. The first place champions.