

# English II Pieces

2018-2019

## One with Them

by Emme Richards

Tonight, Boise's frigid air can't touch the hundreds of people swarming inside Taco Bell Arena. The inviting scent of warm pretzels and alcohol has them forgetting winter even exists. They sit in balconies, in parquets, in front of the stage in full view of a spotless Yamaha piano. They are here to witness a legend. These people are the crocodile rockers, dressed in electric boots and mohair suits.

There's music, but it's not the music they came to hear. This music just tides them over; an appetizer before the main course. Mild chit-chat fills the mile-long line to the women's bathroom. Girls next in line, sporting cotton-candy-colored wigs, discuss embezzlement, and weddings. But there's nothing like the incessant murmuring of voices in the main auditorium, where people adorn signature light-up glasses.

Most present tonight grew up with Elton John singing at them through car radios. They have jobs, kids, and mortgages. She took an extra job to pay for an expensive ticket; he put the kids to bed before this ungodly hour; they both disregarded their debt for a few hours to revel in their childhoods again. As widely-known as Elton is, this event feels exclusive. This audience compromises the ones who have waited "a long, long time."

When the lights finally dim, the crowd erupts in deafening applause. The man walking up on stage is barely visible when everyone begins to stand, pulling phones from their pockets, raising them above all heads. The lights dim further. The crowd begins to quiet. . . until the first chord of *Bennie and the Jets*. . . Lights flash blue with every pounding of the keys. The band appears from nowhere -- a magic act -- suddenly visible on the curious back stage. The crowd sings louder than Elton and his band combined as he begins:

## Juxtaposition

by Emme Richards

I once made a picture of a cross-hatch chicken. When I finished, I realized that dollops of ink had splattered about the paper. I decided to add more splatters to make the error look purposeful. My aunt, a freelance art critic, called it a *coup de grace*. I enjoy art much more when mistakes are noticeable; they make the artist human. Only a machine spits out perfect work every go. Spontaneity makes a piece of art genuine. However, teenage artists on Instagram never point out flaws in their work. They say they're "proud" of the piece and had "fun" working on it. They always add the age at which they made their piece in the description and fill the tags with labels like, "#youngartist" so everyone knows they're talented. Never do they fail to include "self-taught" in their bio.

Why do immature artists make it known they taught themselves? Is having a teacher embarrassing? There is nothing wrong with being taught a skill. No one is born painting like Monet. So many of these young artists say they're self-taught, it is no longer impressive. Teachers are far more beneficial than is teaching oneself. A teacher acknowledges strengths and weaknesses, and tailors a plan to fit your goals. I've tried in vain to teach myself to draw. I skipped past the fundamentals and found it difficult to improve. I regret doing that, as I have wasted time that could have been used more purposefully. Looking for help in any way possible, I took lessons from a High School senior who was teaching art classes as her senior project. I learned more in those few weeks than I could ever had taught myself through observation alone.

Instagram makes life seem perfect, much like many posts on social media. This can be detrimental not only to the artist's health, but to followers as well. According to Amanda Macmillan's #StatusOfMind survey in Time magazine, "Seeing friends constantly on holiday or enjoying nights out can make young people feel like they are missing out while others enjoy life. These feelings can promote a 'compare and despair' attitude."<sup>1</sup> Effects of this attitude include depression, anxiety, and a negative self-image. Robert Bjork, the chair of psychology at UCLA says: "We think of effortless performance as desirable, but it's really a terrible way to learn."<sup>2</sup> Convincing oneself that life is effortless can make it infinitely harder to face obstacles. If an artist has only drawn what he's good at for his entire career, it's going to be hard to create in a genre out of his comfort zone, especially when he's so used to things coming easily.

Art is just one of many activities teens use to express themselves.

*"Hey kids shake it loose together  
The spotlight's hittin' something that's been  
known  
To change the weather! We'll kill the fatted calf  
tonight so stick around."*

No one has to be told: through twenty-four songs, through an encore, through a thank you, and through his last "goodbye," everyone present shares a mutual love. This common love for Elton has brought them all here. He plays *Your Song* like it is for each of his fans alone -- he offers the song as a gift. This audience has flocked to this room to treasure the Elton they have known for years. He delivers in the most authentic, original, Elton John way.

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## Secluded Byway

by Jaeda Moyer

The majority of my childhood was spent traveling along a small free-range cow country road. Every sports game, vacation, school day, and rendezvous started on that dusty dirt course. Our route is taken for granted by all other travelers journeying along the single lane. At night, I listen. There is no activity on the path: the route is a hidden gem known by very few people. After my busy day, coming home and turning onto our road invokes a sense of treasured isolation. No cell reception or outside forces can take these brief moments of refreshing calmness away from me.

My outgoing family is not able to disturb my inner road relaxation. Road rocks create a gentle humming sound that makes other noises hard to hear. When the road finally touches the highway, pandemonium breaks out. Cars race by each other, in a hurry to reach unknown destinations. The stillness is broken and all hell is set loose. Road-raged drivers casually honk horns, upsetting nature's balance in their reckless drives. When I am driving, I long for my dirt road. A strong sense of nostalgia recalls times when I didn't even know how to start a car. Now that I can drive, I crave release from the responsibility of my hands on the wheel. I would rather sit back and listen to the hum of car tires rotating over firm rocks.

Unfortunately, drawing the same picture over and over again is how they do that. I noticed this pattern one day when I was feeling especially bad about my art. I decided to look at some young artists' pages on Instagram to make myself feel worse. It worked, and I had a crying fit out of self-pity. *How were they so good and so much younger? What had they done differently?* After my melt-down, I studied the teens' art with careful attention. Just a few accounts revealed a pattern that proved true for almost every account I viewed: they all draw the same things the same way.

My jealousy and self-pity disappeared. I brought it up in conversation with my aunt. She told me: "Some people are just good at looking at something and putting it on paper."<sup>3</sup> I found it difficult to believe that these people could draw the same picture of Ariana Grande so proportionally accurately, so early in their lives, and only being self-taught. Upon further inspection, I discovered most of the young artists relied on a method called 'gridding' to create their pictures. Gridding can be a cheat; a color-by-numbers. You don't get into the Rhode Island School of Design by gridding every piece.

Social media inhibits creativity; influence and inspiration infects viewers' perspectives. Your Instagram account doesn't belong to you; it belongs to the people who view it. Rarely do people post for themselves. Teens draw so much of the same thing because they seek approval by comparison. Being a teenager, I can say I do this too; mostly with my test grades. This is probably the most harmful, and slow, way to improve. Graham Matthews, artist and blogger, says, "Comparing ourselves to other artists stunts our creative growth. It's difficult to be creative when we are comparing our art with someone else's. We spend more time focusing on what's bad about our own art, than how we can improve it."<sup>4</sup> Comparison leads to unreachable standards, because there is no satisfaction even when someone surpasses the ability of one other person.

In his book on developing talent, Daniel Coyle asks: "What did Florentine artists do?"<sup>5</sup> Well, he answers, they practiced, and they learned from the people they studied under. If you want to grid Ariana Grande, go ahead, no one will stop you. But the quickest way to be a wonderful artist is to create for yourself. Do it because you want to improve. Don't simply try to be better than someone else. But maybe every once in a while, consider making a cross-hatch chicken. Just let the mistakes emerge from the pen, and go with the flow.

1 -- *Time Magazine*. <http://time.com/4793331/instagram-social-media-mental-health/>, May 25, 2017. *Why Instagram Is the Worst Social Media for Mental Health*, by Amanda Macmillan. Viewed on January, 2019.

2 -- Coyle, Daniel. *The Talent Code*. Penguin Random House UK; London, Great Britain: 2009. p. 18

3 -- Miller, Brady. Portland, OR: Personal Interview. August, 2018.

4 -- Art Promotive. <http://www.artpromotivate.com/2013/09/comparing-with-other-artists->

Each spring, divots appear in the road as ice expands through tiny cracks. These small imperfections served as entertainment when I was a toddler. I would open my mouth and hold a note, so whenever the car hit a bump, my voice would sway up and down like a roller coaster. My mom and sister would proceed to tell me to hush, so they could concentrate on their talk about "mature" matters. I would return to enjoying the rhythmic beats of the rocks, until another entertainment arose. My imagination was free and new road games came easily to mind.

My mom once told me a tooth fairy lived in a certain hollowed out tree. When I lost a tooth, I directed my mom to stop at the tree, so I could make sure the tooth fairy heard me. Spiderwebs caught on tree branches became hammocks where my fairy slept. My creative mind had no limits on my secret road trips.

Ten years ago, a mudslide made the side of our road look like an asteroid had hit the Earth. When I took walks on our dusty path, I insisted on looking at the remains. My six-year-old brain was convinced I was going to recover a dinosaur. I made my mom stop the car multiple times, because I wanted to find the dinosaur before any famous archaeologist did. I never did discover any bones, so I gave up my first career as a multi-million-dollar archaeologist.

Although my job discovering dinosaurs ended, my mind never stopped. Our road has embraced all my thoughts, ambitions, and goals. To most passersby, the Fruitvale-Glendale Road is a way to make a car dirty and avoid Highway 95. But my disregarded road is the starting place for every day -- every wish -- I might conquer.

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## Imagination Resuscitation

by Emme Richards

Refreshing, like mint or basil, the smell of Palo Verde triggers something deep within my mind. It awakens me like coffee, without that drink's vitriolic bite. A wonderful concoction of subtle Chinese green tea leaves and rosebud, sprinkled with a hint of nostalgia, the scent of this feathering green tree brings me back to my three-year-old self, nearly melting in the hot Arizona

trap.html, September 5, 2013. *The Trap of Comparing Ourselves with Other Artists*, by Graham Matthews. Viewed on January, 2018.

5 -- Coyle, Daniel. *The Talent Code*. Penguin Random House UK; London, Great Britain: 2009. p. 64.

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## Senior Society

by Jaeda Moyer

"It's not a world championship and they're not paying me a million dollars. I'm just here for a good time," says a frail man with a smile as wide as the Amazon river. The competitors are all older than sixty; some live in the local senior citizen center. Taking twenty minutes to set up, they place tape in an "L" shape after some very precise measurements, arranging the perfect space. Each punctilious mark is accurate and precise. Determined to achieve perfection, these players care about each detail like children fuss over dolls.

Pickleball takes place every Sunday evening in New Meadows, Idaho, from six to eight o'clock. Most sports are filled with high levels of physical activity. Pickleball is not one of those sports. While these seniors are not fit, they play as if they are Serena Williams in the US Open. Running after the ball with legs as stiff as boards, each effort is exceptional. The whiffle ball bounces several times before a delicate old lady scoops it up and hits it back across the net. Acting like teenagers, spry players collect ground balls as if they are baseball outfielders. Pickleball players don't always play by the rules and are never angered at anyone else's mistakes. While most sports have a fast tempo, high tension, and loud supporters, the calmness of pickleball is relaxing like yoga. This gymnasium is like a secret society where people go to find peace of mind.

Watching pickleball is like traveling in a time machine to 2079. These old people are nostalgic for their youth. The simple task of hitting a ball over a net brings back memories of childhood. The simplicity of the game itself is amusing. Like elementary school children, players are engaged in and intrigued by the game. Teenagers cannot understand why anyone would like to spend time playing a slow game. As adults grow older, their youth fades away, but their faces say something different.

The senior pickleball players feel energetic. Their lighthearted joy makes any problems vanish. There is no time to think about anything, except hitting the whiffle ball over the net. Like a pendulum on a clock, the ball goes back and forth, taking up time. As minutes tick away, the game brings up timeless memories; it makes old people feel young. Not one person playing the game has a frown on her face. When physical motion is limited, pickleball is a fun game to play. Pickleball athletes are as eager to share their game as children waiting to open presents on Christmas morning.

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sun. Memories move me in and out of this plane of existence: I'm here in the present, and then suddenly THERE. Time-traveling to those delightful memories of sun increase my seasonal depression as I stare at the five feet of snow outside.

Once a year, I leave familiar Idaho to visit my grandparents in Wickenburg, Arizona. During Idaho's worst snow months, when it merely rains in Arizona, the smell of damp Palo Verde wafts in humid air. In Arizona, the winter weather is still quite tepid: it doesn't pour, it doesn't hail, it pauses at a nice sixty degrees. Rattlesnakes prefer scathing heat, so they hide beneath rocks and holes in muddy ground. To them I say: "Be glad you're not in Idaho!" Responding in my imagination with a shake of their rattles, they hear only: "*Shh! The Gila monsters are hibernating!*"

My once three-year-old imagination, prodded with Palo Verde scents, has become jaded by science. In Arizona, boars understand me; rocks are all precious gemstones fit for a Navajo princess. Even the cacti move when I'm not looking. New yoga moves burst into reality out of the way those arid plants grow. But Arizonans are more into roping than yoga. My grandpa is a roper. I ride his horses around the corral, dust tickling my nose, as brittle hay tempts the horse off course. Sometimes, whiffs of Palo Verde, like the ghost of Christmas Past, come visit my Idaho home. This desert ghost transports me to a time when a younger, curious me played in the Palo Verde.

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### **Small Town, Big Plans**

by Jaeda Moyer

"I remember eating a big carrot by the fire and feeling like I was Bugs Bunny," Emme says, thinking about her childhood in Arizona. She still enjoys mindless cartoons that make her laugh and forget her worries. She sometimes wishes she could go back to her childhood, where her innocence hid her from reality. The move from Arizona to New Meadows protected her three-year-old brain from realizing there were numerous opportunities in other parts of the world. She did not know there was a life outside

### **What Remains**

by Emme Richards

"It's the first thing I think about. I think about our house that burnt down and the train pieces lying on the floor," Jaeda says, recalling her most prominent childhood memory. The train pieces belonged to her sister's Thomas the Tank Engine set. Jaeda enjoyed playing with it along side her sister. "Lilly always used to play with me." Jaeda says, "That was one thing aside from fighting that we would do together." Jaeda had a unique relationship with her sister when the two were younger. Both were adopted from China; even though they are not related by blood and are five years apart, the sisters treat each other like they have been together every moment of their lives. Over the years, they have grown closer.

Jaeda's family lost all their belongings in a house fire when she was nine. Most of the memories of her childhood home, like the train set, involved Lilly. "I traded her my ten-dollar bill for a bunch of pennies, because I valued her companionship more than money," Jaeda recalls. She remembers traveling to Washington D.C. with her sister and reuniting with friends. They would go to plays, concerts, and activity centers. Lilly used to cut Jaeda's hair. They would sleep on the couch together, and pull pranks on one another. Lately, the two sisters have not accompanied each other on a trip to D.C. because Lilly has been busy in college. Jaeda's most vivid memories with her sister still reside in the old house.

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### **Global Entitlement**

by Jaeda Moyer

I used to make gifts. I put time and effort into presents I thought somebody would enjoy. I had no money, but I had the power to create a present from ordinary materials. I used to make ornaments, sweet cards, and work coupons. Until this year, my sister has not liked the majority of the gifts I have given her. I would spend time and money, only to see a disappointed look on her face. She never told me that she did not like the gift, but I could tell.

The saying "money can't buy happiness," may not be true for many Americans, because greed negates gratitude. Researcher Jasmine Williams reports that fifty-four percent of people return their gifts to the store where the item was purchased.<sup>1</sup> People think returning gifts is okay, because everyone else also takes back their unwanted presents. My grandmother stopped giving gifts to an ungrateful family member who only wanted money.

Our society values items that are meaningless, but rare. Early settlers of the American west were willing to give up their belongings and move for a chance to mine a fortune in gold.

her small town of New Meadows. Now that she realizes there is a bigger world out there, "I'll never do anything good with my life," Emme declares, worried about her future contributions to the world. Emme has big aspirations and feels like the people in New Meadows do not care about what they do with their lives. "I feel like I have more drive than they do," Emme states. She hopes to solve some of the world's problems, such as eliminating cancer, global warming, or world hunger. Emme plans to accomplish her goals by going to a credible school like her mother did. "My dad thinks I can do anything," Emme says. She values the importance of her parents' input. Emme may solve the world's problems one day, but first she must tackle high school.

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## Defying Boundaries

by Emme Richards

In a small town in the middle of Idaho, a thirteen-year-old boy has connected with people all over the world. Saying, "I landed on a tree and fell out. . . Shut up Joe, you're bad," he does not glance up; eyes glued to the screen, time very precious, Will Richards chooses to speak in sentences no longer than twelve words.

Every parent, sibling, and friend wonders why young gamer boys are obsessed with video games. "Cause they're fun," Will says, "you get to play with your friends." Will plays with his friends from school, with newfound acquaintances from Detroit, and with strangers from England. They bond over a universal love for virtual reality. Speaking for many young gamers, Will says: "The violenter the better!" His go-to games are not recommended for him to play at thirteen. His favorite, *Rainbow Six Siege*, is rated Mature, for blood, violence, strong language, and drug usage, meaning it is only suitable for players older than seventeen.

"Everyone does it," Will explains, "they're more fun." He doesn't find games made for kids his age very entertaining. He's not the only one who thinks that, or else he wouldn't have met friends from Michigan, whom he plans to visit someday.

Will focuses on skill development and on spending quality time with friends. He admits to

Society insists on wedding rings made of this material. If a person loves his fiance', he is subjected to buying an expensive ring made of gold. In Utopia, Sir Thomas More creates an imaginary perfect society. There, people use gold for toilets to diminish the value its citizens place on gold. In this utopic society:

*". . .their chamber pots and stools both in their public halls and their homes are made of gold and silver. They also use these metals for the chains and fetters of their bondmen They hang gold rings from the ears of criminals, place gold rings on their fingers, gold collars around their necks, and gold crowns on their heads. Thus they hold gold and silver up to scorn in every way."*<sup>2</sup>

In an ideal society, people would not think polished rocks are magnificent, but would value authentic relationships. Brides and lovers the world over fight and kiss, but then place inordinate value on a piece of metal.

The consumption of goods consumes Americans' - - and especially teens' - - minds. This year, the McCall-Donnelly High School senior soccer girls made the underclassmen purchase some items for their senior night. The seniors suggested candy apples, candy, water bottles, and blankets. The freshmen, sophomores, and juniors purchased these gifts to show the seniors they were grateful for their time on the soccer team. I bought candy and helped acquire materials for this special night; not once did I receive a thank you from one of the honored ladies. The seniors are good people, but forgetting that senior night is meant to allow underclassmen to show appreciation towards their teammates, seniors become demanding, entitled, and greedy.

"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'"<sup>3</sup> Greed is one of the seven basic vices. Many citizens neglect people in need. The National Alliance to End Homelessness estimates that twenty-four percent of Americans are chronically homeless. <sup>4</sup> Americans could supply homeless people with food, since forty percent of America's food is tossed out.<sup>5</sup> When I was an eighth grader, the Meadows Valley School District middle school recognized the homeless problem in Boise. Students prepared boxes to take give to a homeless shelter with supplies people needed. Giving to someone less unfortunate made me feel like I was helping someone besides myself for a change.

By looking out for themselves, people forget to care about others. America is strong economically, but does not give its best effort to help other countries. In Africa, approximately 3,000 children die per day from malaria.<sup>6</sup> This disease can be treated, but many Africans do not have the luxury of medical treatment. Malaria pills cost one to five dollars a day.<sup>7</sup> Americans are willing to let children die due to a lack of malaria pills, although providing them would be just a little expense to Americans.

spending four hours on his XBOX 1 every day during the school week, and seven hours a day during the weekend. Complicated games are a favorite. He likes to figure them out with the sheer power of his mind. "What?! No, I don't watch tutorials! That's so stupid," Will exclaims. His favorite games take skill, time, and practice. "I like first person shooters, because they're violent," he says. "And blood is fun." The more realistic a game is, the more likely it is going to be approved by thirteen-year-old boys. Video games continue to become more realistic; Will argues that they do not make people numb towards real violence. He finds such games harmless. "I don't think I'm any more prone to murder someone than a regular person," he says.

Will does very well in school, despite never doing the very little homework he is actually assigned. His GPA is a 3.5 and he is popular among students in his grade. Will's friends know him as 'that kid that plays video games all the time' but that doesn't inhibit him from doing other things. "Besides games, I play with Fin," he says. Fin is a golden retriever Will adopted last summer with his hard-earned money. He has raised him from a puppy and proved to his parents he is responsible. Will also hunts with his cousin and grandpa. He shot a deer in November, which has become a staple dinner in our house. He's an adamant basketball player and he hopes to play on the Meadows Valley Varsity Junior High team this winter.

Will earned his money for Fin by working under-the-table for a local golf course, picking up golf balls on the driving range and setting out carts for golfers. Although he was paid less than minimum wage, Will miraculously earned enough to adopt Fin, who was sold at discount because he gets carsick. Will was hardly seen during the summer months, except when leaving for work. He worked about six hours a day, and only on days where the course was busy. Will made time to practice his games before leaving and immediately when he got back. Because Will is a working boy, he demands respect from his family. "I'm not four anymore, okay? You can't make me eat my two ounces of left-over salmon," he says, avoiding his father who is trying to force feed him a piece of pink fish.

Will's cognitive gears are constantly turning. He enjoys puzzles and educational videos. He

Because I think about inequities like these, and because I am an American, I feel guilty when I am given a gift. I consciously know another person could use many items more than I need presents. I receive a lot of gifts, while many families in my town struggle to come up with enough money to buy food for their children. My friend does not have much money, and her mom asked some close friends for money to buy Christmas presents for her kids. This mom was scrounging for money and I had new toys that would seem old in a few days. I felt ashamed of focusing on what I had instead of noticing that my friend needed help. I don't have a job and my friend works two jobs to help pay family bills. In the end, what matters is how people impact the lives of others. I want to leave the Earth with the knowledge I helped others, rather than having possessions and money in my will.

My aunt bought me a star when I was younger. The certificate that gave me possession of the star was a way for a company to make money by putting my name on a piece of paper, but the distant ball of helium was considered "mine." The star is protected from others' ownership by the slip of paper I was given. The gift did not cost much, but the present will last a lifetime. I was not very grateful for the gift at first, but now I realize this was the best gift. No other presents given to me are going to last like my star. The gift was not only good for me, but for the rest of the world by not adding to future waste piles. If people banish their self-centered behaviors by thinking more about others surrounding them, Americans could focus on solutions to fix catastrophic global problems.

1 -- Credit Donkey, <https://www.creditdonkey.com/gift-giving.html>, October 12, 2018, *Gift Giving Statistics: What Is Underneath Your Christmas Tree?* by Jasmine Williams.

2 -- Sir Thomas More. *Utopia*. *Anthology of British Literature*. p. 1067.

3 -- Hebrews 13:5.

4 -- National Alliance to End Homeless, <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/who-experiences-homelessness/chronically-homeless/>, October 14, 2018, *Chronically Homeless* by National Alliance to End Homeless.

5 -- Live Science, <https://www.livescience.com/5919-americans-toss-40-percent-food.html>, November 17, 2018, *Americans Toss Out 40 Percent of All Food* by Robert Roy Britt.

6 -- The Borgen Project, <https://borgenproject.org/10-quick-facts-about-poverty-in-africa/>, October 14, 2018, *U.N. Millennium Project* written by Jordanna Packtor

7 -- <https://www.howmuchisit.org/malaria-vaccine-cost/>, October 17, 2018, *Health Costs* written by Howmuchisit.org Staff

doesn't like to be taught, but he does like to learn on his own. He is his own teacher, which is why he doesn't watch tutorials. He may only want expensive things for Christmas, but he will be grateful, or at least act grateful, for whatever he gets. Will only enjoys activities he wants to do. He may not like picking up balls in a golf cart, but he does like to carve donuts with the cart when his boss isn't looking.

Will may be the average kid, or a game-obsessed one, but he is more cultured than one would expect. He is experienced in the behaviors of people around the world, he knows what kids like, and he also knows, from multiple prohibitions on XBOX Live, that racial slurs are inappropriate and shouldn't be taken lightly. During the day, Will is a hard-working boy at school, surrounded by ordinary classmates. By night, he's a sniper with comrades from South Africa, New York, and Japan, influencing outcomes one flick of a controller at a time. "Are you done yet?" he asks me loudly over the cacophony in his headphones. "Because I really don't care if this is going in an essay."

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### Listen

by Jaeda Moyer

*BOOM!*

Bass roars: loud as  
a lion protecting its cub,  
scaring weakness into  
every **charcoal** shadow.

Beats race, faster than cheetahs on steroids.  
Prey hide beneath large clumps  
of eighth notes.

Volume dies.

Light pink tangerine sun rises:  
a gentle *hummmmm*  
mellows out its tone,  
*allargando*, as the song  
begins.

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### Two Species Alike

### Winter Glow

by Emme Richards

Glimmering crystals;  
wonderful pearly world  
atop rolling hills.  
Chilly birch treetops  
shiver in piercing wind.  
Lonely blades of barley  
resist this blank canvas,  
waving weakly  
beneath azure sky.

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### Surplus of Supplies

by Jaeda Moyer

Walking into a store at the beginning of August, any sun-tanned gleeful teen catches a glimpse of back-to-school supplies and suddenly, a darkened mood arrives. Colorful rows of cheap supplies are a harbinger that summer is almost over. I do not appreciate returning to school, but relish the fun supplies I acquire. I have a strange collection of erasers, mini staplers, mini binders, pencils, and crazy pens. I am not obsessed; just a unique collector.

Supplies motivate me for school, because I need an excuse for purchasing school necessities for my collection. As a sophomore, I need multiple colors of highlighters, sticky notes, random items to tinker with when boredom strikes, flash cards, binders, etc. I am able to accomplish anything with my trusty peanut eraser in hand.

I do not know when my collection started, but I will never stop buying stationery. In elementary school, I was cool for having such fun supplies. High schoolers typically have trouble finding a single pencil and ask me to borrow a writing utensil. I have an advantage over other students by coming to class prepared. On bad days, school supplies bring security and a safety net: one task is going as planned. I receive better grades than those students asking for pencils. I enjoy having my schoolwork under control with my well-arranged process. My life is organized so I can tackle my goals, but first comes *homework*.

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### Imminent

by Emme Richards

Cats are mysterious creatures. I too, am shrouded in mystery. Perhaps it is because I am shy and quiet like an Abyssinian or elusive like a Balinese. As a cat person, I see similarities between me and my feline companions. Our personalities change with the weather, the food we eat, or even a simple, unwelcome touch. I am affectionate yet distant. I wisely choose the people I spend my precious time with. I am a wallflower. I observe everyone's daily actions from afar. Earning my trust is not an easy task; I have to get to know a person first. At times, I seem like I have no cares in the world but, in actuality, every detail matters.

While I have the complex personality of a cat, I sometimes also long to really be one. I would love to be a lazy kitty, who is fed constantly and receives incessant attention. I want a feline's sharp wit, and warm, radiant fur. Owning cats has put things into perspective for me. I take their purrs for granted when it is really a great honor to be given attention from such a majestic creature. Sometimes, I do not recognize when people go out of their way to do something nice for me. I can hardly figure myself out with my feline personality, but I am glad I can surprise people with all my hidden abilities. With great gifts come great responsibilities. *Purrr. . .*

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### **Indolent**

by Jaeda Moyer

Procrastination is the key,  
though it is not ideal,  
it seems to be the case for me:  
I want to eat a meal.

I go downstairs to work on stuff,  
something besides my job.  
Entering our yellow kitchen,  
I make corn on the cob,

sit down to eat my veggies,  
and hear a little voice.  
My conscience tells me to do work,  
proceeding with a choice:

do my schoolwork now,

by Emme Richards

Tepid midnight clouds blend cotton  
into a stony heaven.  
Humidity is a harbinger  
for impending rain.  
Abstract rays of sun  
dimly glow through gaps in clouds.  
Slight breezes  
twist through decaying aspen leaves,  
barely latched to skinny limbs.  
Melancholy world waiting to be drenched.

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### **War and Peace**

by Jaeda Moyer

"I think the people that like war haven't been there," says John Moyer, reflecting on memories of Vietnam. Combat was never fun, but he fought hard and, "I never was medivacked. The military didn't have to take me out for sickness or wounds," he says. "I was proud of myself for not being taken out. I still am kind of proud I was never medivacked. I survived." The war shaped the way he views movies in ways that most people cannot see: "I was there. It wasn't in the movie but a lot of people that watch it don't see the things I see. The guys going to fight were all flushed out and guys coming home were skinny as rails especially if they had been in the jungle."

From our house in rural Idaho, he reflects on life in Vietnam. "One of the guys had a pet monkey. One night it sat by my leg and cleaned every hair on my leg while I was playing cards," John says. His kindness towards animals made the monkey like him. People who treated the monkey poorly would be screamed at by the furry little creature. He is not sure if the monkey survived the war. John thinks acts of killing innocent people should be stopped. "I think there are times war might be necessary," he says. "Genocides that happened in Croatia and Yugoslavia should have resulted in warfare, because one person killed others due to their nationality." He does not understand how ignorant people desire to kill someone on purpose.

Flashing back to the times when he did not have to do dishes, John treasures memories of his childhood: "I pitched the ball with Dale; there were times I was really good and other times, I just hit them out." His transition from childhood to adulthood changed quickly when he was between eighteen and twenty years old. "I had to take care of myself. I left home when I went to college and never really went back. I didn't have a reason to, I was either working or I came out west."

John came to Idaho when he took a summer job working for the



or I can have some fun.  
The answer is so lucid - -  
I must enjoy the sun.

I play all day. When I return,  
my paper is still here.  
I look at it once more to see,  
that I am nowhere near,

so I leave it be for a minute,  
and let ideas flow.  
I come back to my desk and find  
that it is time to mow.

I mow the grass so it looks neat,  
hitting some rocky dirt.  
I climb the stairs to my blue room,  
and change my dirty shirt.

I work on my English paper  
typing all night 'til dawn,  
so tired I need some coffee.

I admire my smooth lawn.

I wish I had not put things off,  
I want a good night's sleep.  
In school, I am so quiet:  
I sleep without a peep.

At home I see a field: so lush!  
I give my sister sass,  
then go outside for some fresh air;  
plopping down on my mowed grass.

Payette National Forest. "I couldn't think of anything I wanted to do. I was a hunter and fisherman growing up," he says. John's previous wife had died, leading him to treasure his present wife, Linda Moyer, who also grew up in Pennsylvania. "It was the right time I guess," John says. "She is a good woman." He now spends his time reading, doing dishes, taking care of his girls, and playing golf.

His passion for golf allows him to spend treasured time with his friends. "I play all the time, I enjoy golf; the game is fun. I do not expect to be good," John says, "just as good as Bill and Steve." If he could never play golf again, he would be devastated. "I would be most disappointed; I would probably wilt away." When he is able to spend time with his extended family, at their old farm house in Pennsylvania, he golfs with his brothers and son. The trip to Pennsylvania is worth the long flight to him, because "You appreciate siblings the older you are. I like going back home and seeing them," he says. "Siblings are there for you and they love you, even if sometimes you don't think so. You just get closer."

John reads many war stories he finds interesting. His favorite books are Killer Angels, by Michael Shaara, or Platoon, by Oliver Stone. "They are both good stories. Killer Angels is about civil war, which was a very interesting time, and Platoon was what I kind of experienced," he says. Much like Platoon, some parts of war were exciting and some were boring. John is grateful to be alive and now lives for his family.

John Moyer cooks dinners, and enjoys creating dishes. He has learned how to make different flavors of pie. "I ate one whole pie that my mom baked and my grandma grinned as my mom was amazed that I ate the whole pie," he says. Now, baking pies reminds him of his teenage years. He has passed on some traditions to his daughters. His girls make applesauce, homemade pancakes, and have grown close to family, much like John Moyer himself. He appreciates the simple lifestyle he lives now and doesn't take his experiences for granted. John has endured harsh times, but those times have forced him to cherish the present.