

# Skipping Stones

Vol. 27, No. 4  
Oct.-Dec. 2015

A Multicultural Literary Magazine

\$7.00

*2015 Youth Honor Awards*



**Two Sides of China** by Sophie Xu, 16, Illinois.

*Art by Isabella Ronchetti, 13, Virginia*

Isabella's Artist's Statement is on page 22.

**1. Daughter of Fallen Stars**



**3. Go Ahead, Break the Glass**



**2. Chasing Its Own Tail**



**4. Corrida de Toros**



Welcome to the 2015 Youth Awards issue!

This summer America celebrated 25 years of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the advances that it has brought to our society. Wheelchair accessible sidewalks and ramps to public buildings, and ASL interpretation for hearing-impaired are just a few visible signs of progress.

Some 54 million Americans have one or more kinds of disabilities. Visual impairments and mobility issues are easier to spot, but there are many other physical and mental conditions that also put serious limitations. Over 24 million in the U.S. have severe disability. ADA gives many of them an opportunity to live a fuller life with dignity, independence, and at the same time, allows them to contribute to society. Visit [National Council on Disability's website](http://National Council on Disability's website) to learn more.

Living with a disability is a big problem for the 650 million of people worldwide. Governments in many low-income countries either don't have the awareness, the will, or the resources to invest into making their buildings, streets and events accessible for citizens with disabilities. Men, women, and children with disability have remained second-class citizens for too long. The U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities hopes to change this for good.

Eugene, Oregon is home to MIUSA (Mobility International USA), an organization that works to advance the rights of people with disabilities worldwide. It empowers people with disabilities to work for their human rights through international exchange and international development. MIUSA's vision is to ensure a just, accessible, and inclusive community in which the human rights, citizenship, contribution, and potential of people with disabilities are respected and celebrated.

This summer, MIUSA organized their annual gathering where 17 disabled women activists from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Eastern Europe, and Latin America convened in Eugene for the Women's Institute on



The WILD Participants. Photo by Dana Vion/Sky's the Limit Creative Services

Leadership and Disability (WILD). The women activists sharpened their skills, learned cross-disability access strategies, and applied the principles of empowerment, inclusion and pride to training activities. They hope to extend this leadership training experience to more than 400 disabled women and girls in 17 countries.

As a Human Rights Commissioner for Eugene, I attended two evening programs and met some of these amazing women activists with a wide range of disabilities—from blindness, deafness, to mobility issues. The programs were interpreted in ASL (American Sign language), pidgin sign language, and Spanish, as well as 'live captioned' for the deaf or hearing-challenged.

I learned first-hand from the WILD participants how wonderful it feels to break barriers and to live with independence and dignity. These women activists are working to improve the educational, legal, political, and social systems in their home countries so that all people with disabilities can have a more fulfilling life.

There are many reasons for disabilities—accidents, illnesses, injuries, medical conditions, pharmaceutical drugs, pollution, physical abuse, wars, and land mines, etc. So, rightfully, it is the responsibility of the society to include all of its members. We must move forward purposefully to reduce elements that cause disabilities and also make the world more accessible for all! Indeed, a great deal of work and opportunities lie ahead for us all.

Arun Toké, editor

# Skipping Stones

Vol. 27, No. 4

Oct. - Dec. 2015

ISSN: 0899-529X

## The 2015 Youth Honor Awards

- 5 Kimbap and Smiles  
7 ¡Sí, Se Puede!  
10 Poems Are Where the Heart Is  
11 **Cultural Collage:** Visiting Palestine  
12 Three Words in English  
13 The Velvet Rope • On the Banks of the River

## 2015 Skipping Stones Youth Honor Awards

- Cover: Two Sides of China by Sophie Xu, 16, Illinois  
2 Art by Isabella Ronchetti, 13, Virginia  
14 Samsara: The Yellow River by Nicole Chan, 15, Hong Kong  
15 The Making of Me by Sophie Xu, 16, Illinois  
16 Poems and Art by Students at Na‘au, Hawai‘i  
18 The Beauty of Giving by Angela Liu, 16, California  
19 When Winter Falls by A. Liu • Forsaken into Understanding by Raul Dutta, 14, MI.  
20 You Can't Save the World in a Week: Tree-planting in Mongolia by Ryan Yi, 16, CA.  
21 Ode to Chinese Dragon by Alex Lam, 15, Hong Kong  
22 I Don't Remember by Abbie Menard, gr. 8, VA • Alone by Doug Roche, 17, Michigan  
23 A Kaleidoscope of Languages by Elaine Park, 16, Washington  
24 Bitter and Cold by Karishma Muthukumar, 15, California  
25 Bridge: Vol. 1, by K. & P. Muthukumar • Light by Lindsey Mutz, 16, Michigan  
26 Just Following Orders: At Khmer Rouge Tribunal by Nicole Weinrauch, 13, Singapore  
27 **Noteworthy Entries:** The Last Candle • Racial Profiling • Sunset  
28 The Gray City • I Am an Artist • I Am the Guanaco  
29 Korea: Land of... • Hanging off the Wall • Mother Nature



Artist Isabella, p. 2

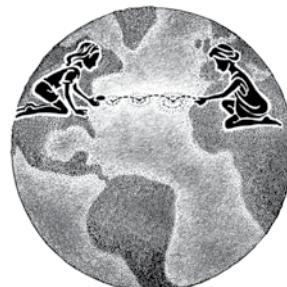


In Palestine, p. 11

- 30 The Last Glimpse of Happiness • By Streams that Never Find...  
31 **Nana Jean on Creativity**  
34 Cultural Dance Competition in Namibia  
35 Art Collages by Students at Na‘au, Hawai‘i

## Regular Departments

- 3 From the Editor  
6 What's On Your Mind?  
8 Skipping Stones Stew  
32 BookShelf  
33 Noteworthy N.E.W.S.  
36 Back Cover: Colorful Art Entries



### Skipping Stones

is now on Facebook,  
Twitter and Instagram!  
Like our page for  
updates, news, and  
upcoming stories!



In the spirit of eco-  
logical sensitivity, we  
choose to print with  
soy ink on recycled  
and recyclable paper  
(with a 30% post-  
consumer recy-  
cled content).



© 2015 by Skipping Stones, Inc. Opinions expressed in these pages reflect views of the contributors,  
and not necessarily those of Skipping Stones, Inc. Ideas expressed are not a professional advice.

## About Skipping Stones:

**Skipping Stones** is a nonprofit children's magazine that encourages cooperation, creativity and celebration of cultural and linguistic diversity. We explore stewardship of the ecological and social webs that nurture us. We offer a forum for communication among children from different lands and backgrounds. *Skipping Stones* expands horizons in a playful, creative way. We invite you to send us your creative art and thought-provoking writing.

**Skipping Stones** (Pub. No. 015-089) is published quarterly by Skipping Stones, Inc., 166 W. 12th Ave., Eugene, Oregon 97401. Postage paid at periodicals rate at Eugene, OR. *Postmaster: Please send address changes to: Skipping Stones, P. O. Box 3939 Eugene, OR 97403-0939.*

**Subscriptions:** *Institutions: \$35 (call for multiple-copy discount); Individuals: \$25; Airmail: add \$15; Low-income discount: \$10. Single or back issues: \$7 each (\$10 by air).*

To submit, subscribe or reprint, **contact: Skipping Stones, Inc.** P. O. Box 3939, Eugene, OR 97403 USA; (541) 342-4956; e-mail: [editor@SkippingStones.org](mailto:editor@SkippingStones.org); Website: **[www.SkippingStones.org](http://www.SkippingStones.org)**

## Acknowledgements

**Editor/Publisher:** Arun Narayan Toké

**Interns:** Elizabeth Ponce, Daemion J. L. Lee, Megan Chan, Kaily Coon, Ty Freed, Olivia Syverson

**Student Reviewers:** Sylvia Onorato, Margaux Winter, Sarah Busse, Koyuki Sakurada, Cameron Comrie, Karishma Muthukumar, Lucy Hsiao

**Board of Directors:** Paulette Ansari, Esther Celis, Stephen Mallery, Ron Marson, Joachim Schulz, and Arun N. Toké.

**Special Thanks** to Bidyut Das, our contributors, and teachers whose students' work is featured in this issue. Thanks also to the Oregon Community Foundation, A. & A. Charitable Fund and Richard Haughland Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation, Advanced Relay Corp., Oregon Country Fair, Bankoff Blanchet Family Foundation, Ruth Koenig, Jon Bush, and Estela Bernal for their continued financial support.

**Skipping Stones, Inc.** is an educational and charitable organization with a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. Donations to *Skipping Stones, Inc.* are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please support our *free (and discounted) subscriptions* for low-income schools, libraries and families with your donations.

*Winner of three National Association for Multicultural Education Awards, EdPress Association of America, Writer Magazine, NewsStand Resources, E.E.A. and Parent's Choice Awards.*



## Kimbab and Smiles

Two years ago when I was still living in China, I visited an orphanage for disabled children who were abandoned at infancy. It was summer, and the air was warm and moist. In the trunk of the car were sacks of rice, bundles of vegetables, and bottles of condiments. We travelled to a place just barely at the outskirts of Beijing. The skyscrapers and glass and steel office buildings were still in view, but I was in the midst of shabby houses and run down brick buildings. The orphanage was housed in a row of one story flats and there was a strip of pavement for the children to play in. The volunteer group I was with included a woman from South Korea who taught us how to make *kimbap* for the children. She was only visiting the city but had made helping others a routine part of her travels.



We spent the first part of our visit unloading rice, washing spinach in dusty sinks on the ground, and boiling water in the cramped kitchen. Then came spreading the sticky rice onto seaweed and laying carrots, spinach, *dannmuji*, and cucumbers onto the rice. Finally, we squished it into a tight roll and cut it into slices.

When we first served it to the children, some were unsure at first of this new type of food (vegetables wrapped in rice? How strange!), but after their first bite, they soon caught on. Grinning, the children soon finished the plates of neatly stacked *kimbap*. There was one girl with a lopsided smile, shrouded in an orange sweater. Every time she ate another *kimbap*, she would peek up at me and smile and giggle. Maybe she was glad she was trying new food, or maybe she was glad because people came to visit her, but it was these little moments of happiness that makes helping others worthwhile. It might be a small fraction of their lives, but a difference is still a difference.

—Sophie Xu, 16, Chinese American, Illinois. Sophie is one of the Youth Award Winners. Please see pages 1, 8, and 15.



## Cyberbullying Must Be Stopped

Did you know that innocent teenagers across the country are committing suicide every day due to cyberbullying? The use of electronics to harm, embarrass, threaten, or spread rumors has begun to replace traditional bullying. Victims don't even feel safe at home, because they can be attacked anywhere, anytime. We need to stop cyberbullying by educating citizens and enforcing laws and rules against it.

Encouraging children to look from the victim's perspective is one effective solution, as some may not understand the severity of their actions. Enforcing laws and rules is another. Some may believe cyberbullying laws are too harsh, but rules need to be enforced to control and prevent another adolescent from taking their own life. Working together, a community can send a unified message against bullying.

Critics will say that traditional bullying is more severe than cyberbullying. I disagree. Cyberbullying only takes a push of a button to harm another individual. It is a risk someone is more likely to take when there is no one around to see where it originated from; an easy, sneaky way to cause harm. This bully is faceless, and their victim's unnoticed pressure is unbearable. Old school bullying is easier to catch and prevent. One can step in during the attack, acknowledging the bully and the harm of his/her victim. Cyberbullying spreads rapidly and goes unnoticed often until the victim is dead.

Until people realize cyberbullying is a viral disease, silent impressionable young victims will continue to suffer. If you saw a child being attacked by a bully, wouldn't you jump in to help? So why not try to prevent it from ever happening? Don't wait until this senseless act hits home or hurts someone you love. Act now by educating our children and enforcing the necessary laws to protect them.

—Dayton Hamele, 15,  
New Hampshire.

What will you do to stop cyberbullying?

### Robbing Nature

Beauty and the beast;  
Nature meshed in resources  
Beauty will be gone  
Pure modest beauty;  
Sacred yet disadvantaged  
Beauty to be lost  
We are all true beasts;  
Robbing nature of her wealth  
The end is unknown  
We see resources;  
Take everything, leave nothing  
Stealing the beauty

—Kayla Carrigan, 18, Massachusetts.

## What's On Your Mind?

### Eyes: Owls and Nature

Since my first sighting of the spotted wood owls when I was four, I look for them often. The volume of excitement may have changed, but the magic in their eyes, and in turn, in my eyes, has not. I don't think that will ever change for me. At least, I hope not. It may not be the same for other people, but for the four-year-old who first looked up at the owls, her toes wiggling in her shoes from excitement, she still watches patiently. This time her 13-year-old-self watches as the three owls look down on her from above. The owls seem to say, "Who's this?" As if they don't know. Their black eyes blink.

There are fewer branches and trees for the owls to live in now, fewer places for them to look down on to little four-year-olds, so those children can admire their beauty, to know what these owls look like in the wild, and not from behind cage bars and glass walls.

Behind cage bars and glass walls the owls' eyes have none of the shine that they should. Bars only hold frightened owls awaiting a shortened life time of servitude. They are the prisoners that generate someone's income and create pity from naïve tourists. No one seems to be able to leave nature be. Their trees are taken, leaving high-rises, roads, and new school buildings in their wake. Owls can't live in apartments, they live in trees, big and sprawling ones. They don't live in cages. They don't live nor die trapped in incubators that smell strongly of disinfectant. They smell just of dirt and damp, of light and dark and the late night hoot that hangs on the breeze. Just as the silver of the butterflies' wings brush away as you touch them, every animal does the same, when nature is touched, just more quietly. More subtly. The vibrancy and the colours slowly fade away. You can't catch it, you can't hold it in your hands, because the colour is already flying away with the winds. But when left alone, when nature is left untouched and unaffected, it shines through everything, just as the light catches the eyes of owls.

—Ella McAuliffe, grade 8, was  
born in Australia but lives in Singapore.



# ¡Sí, Se Puede!

*A piece about the many challenges we face when we try to learn a second language.*

“¡No se puede!”

It was the beginning of the school year, and the last class of the first day was AP Spanish. As I sat down at my seat, I could feel the creeping trepidation in my toes. There was no point ignoring the blatant fact that I had spent the whole summer not uttering a single word of Spanish. Many of my peers were already bilingual, while I had learned my limited Spanish from the textbooks. Actually, my Spanish career could be traced exactly from grammar exercises in *Realidades* 1, 2, 3, and 4. I had stepped inside a completely different world, leaving the regular lull and comfort of predictable classes outside the door.

When Señora Gloria entered the room, she brought with her a wave of energy and cultural pride. A native of Costa Rica, she delightfully drew our attention to a huge poster with a coffee bean press and the words, “Pura Vida.” Pure life was the motto of her country, and that set the tone for the rest of the school year. Every day, class started with, “¿Cómo están, muchachos?” And we quickly caught on that the best response was not *bien*, but ¡Pura Vida!

This was the first time I had been taught by a native Spanish speaker. Sometimes in passing, I could hear Señora Gloria teaching, and the distinguishing inflection of her voice filled with emotion rising up and down. Not only was she clearly fluent, but she had all the cultural insights and family folklore. She would tell us of growing up and visiting her grandparents, or how she met her husband at the university when he was an English teacher. She could also relate firsthand to the struggles that come with learning a foreign language. English song lyrics that her children would listen in the car would pass over her head. I have felt the same desperation when trying to understand lyrics to Spanish songs in class. As the year progressed, the more I came to understand that our stories fit together like puzzle pieces.

Yet every day I entered class with a knot in my stomach. Over fifty percent of my peers had grown together in a tight knit dual immersion family. This was the first time that the Spanish 4 students had been thrown into the mix. I felt like I had entered a family reunion where I was a new addition judged from afar by the aunts and uncles. Before class would start, they

would joke around and their laughter unnerved me. Were they laughing at me? My pronunciation? I was probably the most unlikely candidate for AP Spanish. I was adopted from China when I was three. In elementary school, my best friend was Uruguayan. When she returned to her homeland, I visited her traveling across a ferry from Buenos Aires. At that time, I had no Spanish under my belt. After the flooding embarrassment of my inability to communicate, I vowed to learn Spanish. The next school year, I enrolled in Spanish 1A.

The twisted path had led me to AP Spanish. Then there was the mention of the first exam. My heart dropped at the notion of writing whole paragraphs in a foreign tongue within an hour and a half. The next day, I met with Señora Gloria ready to confess that I should drop from the class.

“No,” she told me, “Se puede.” You can’t drop it.

She opened up to me, revealing she had the highest respect for the non-bilingual students. As for the other students, they were there as the functioning support beams waiting to be called on for help. In parting, she left me with this advice.

“My goal for you is to raise your hand more, and not be afraid just to try. The mistakes will come. That is the only way you are going to get better.”

*Pura Vida.*

—Chloe Mills, 17, Chinese American, Oregon.



“I feel passionate about not bullying. I think we should treat people the way we want to be treated. For example, when I come home from school and I see my little brother crying because someone hurt him, I’m sad. My thoughts are if a bully did that to my brother, then maybe he/she was bullied before. *Why do you think a bully is a bully?* I believe it is a vicious cycle that is hard to unlearn. *How do you think we can stop bullies?* When someone bullies you, don’t bully someone else. Be respectful to others even when they aren’t the nicest. (I know that might be hard.) Stick up for others that are being bullied. Always communicate your feelings. Respectfully,”

—Myah Landauer, 9, Colorado.



## *Through A Window*

When the white sails  
are gone from the lake, you know  
winter has whirled to Chicago. Windswept  
streets, cold, cold, through the window pane,  
and the lake a pure, cool blue.

Summers back, I looked through another  
window then,  
to a sun drenched Australian town.  
Winters ago, white fingers of smog  
pried through curtains, but now  
I see, still through my square of a window,  
where clouds touch the silent lake.

Where my window lies in two years' time,  
I do not know. But for now I wait:  
for the lake to freeze,  
the vapor rise, and mists to blur the horizon.  
Then soon, soon, the yachts return,  
Yet I'll be watching another sun rising.

*Photo & poem: Qianyue (Sophie) Xu, 16, Illinois.*

## *Fishing With Dad*

We walk out to the old  
oak dock.  
The water glistens like  
blue sapphires.  
I cast my crystal clean line out  
with a thrust of my arm.  
It's silent except for the sound  
of baby blue dragon flies  
buzzing around.  
My mind wanders to the old  
times of fishing this same  
small blue pond with my dad.  
Suddenly I feel a tag on my pole and the thick  
jet black rod arches over.  
My heart starts to race.  
I flick my pole back.  
The fish puts up and fight and leaps  
through the water but  
I reel in the fish with ease.  
And pull it out of the sparkling water.  
The slick, slimy, gray fish  
shines in the pumpkin sunset.

*—Theodore Harwin, 13, Missouri.*

## *Swimming*

I tighten my goggles  
Diving in  
Submerged entirely  
Frolicking with bubbles  
I resurface  
Gasping for air  
Push off  
The lukewarm waves  
Ripple over me  
I shoot through the water  
Like a silver arrow  
Changing from human  
To an unearthly creature  
One filled with power  
Who doesn't drown  
The hard cement wall  
Under my fingertips  
Just in my reach  
I resurface  
Dreams rolling off  
Like water dripping  
As I  
Swim

*—Ruta Rajpathak, 11, Washington.*

## *Parks in Autumn*

In autumn, leaflets tiptoe  
wood-coat benches, curling  
within themselves. Wind drops  
them off on gravel and grass,  
piles slowly teeming.  
Their colors are kaleidoscopes—  
medleys of green and red and orange  
captured between sultry summer  
lights and none.

*—Alice Xu, 17, New Jersey.*

## *The Beach*

The ocean is a deep blue,  
The sand as smooth as silk.  
Waves lap against the shore,  
As calm as the ocean floor.

The beach is an open book,  
Full of stories to be told.

Layer upon layer,  
Worn off by human feet.

There is nothing that can beat,  
Going to the beach.

*—Kayla McAllister, 13, Colorado.*



## Dandelions

I am a flower, a misfit perhaps.  
Gardeners pick me; children stomp on me.  
But why I am so different like the Lily or  
my Aunt Sunflower,  
my petals sparkle in the sun.  
My bright yellow compliments the shiny  
green grass.

I too want to be beautiful,  
to be given as a present on Mothers Day,  
to be given to a performer after her show.  
But no, I am just a weed.  
Nothing more.

—Anna Scovell, 15, Missouri.

## Where I Come From

Places don't stay rooted where they are, they move  
They travel throughout the world with those who have seen them.

Rainy places leave an imprint on those who have lived in them,  
Like the rain-drops have slithered into their minds.

These rain-drops are special, they're one of a kind,  
Different in each and every mind, never drying up.

Sunlight beaming down constantly on others soaks into their skin,  
Follows those people throughout their travels, picking up other sounds,

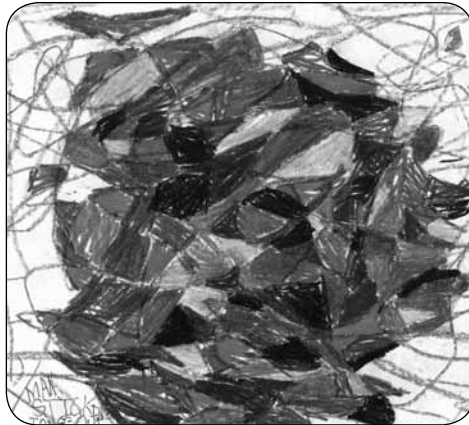
Other smells, other sights, new things and old,  
Smells of gravel, smells of pine, sounds of thunder, and sounds of birds,  
All compressed into a single person's mind.

—Ecem Mimoglu, 15, Turkey.

## The New Me

i want to live  
in the concrete jungle,  
fall in love in manhattan,  
live in greenwich,  
shop in soho,  
cry in times square,  
and die  
in brooklyn.  
my dreams will be  
the graffiti on buildings,  
taxis will carry my ideas, and  
the click clack of heels worn by elites  
on the sidewalks in front of famous  
ziggurats will announce my name.  
i want to leave my prints on the old  
cement,  
i want people to know me,  
i want new york to be mine  
and i  
new york's.

—Amera Aly, 15, New Jersey.  
"I am Egyptian, American,  
Ukrainian, and Russian.  
I speak, write, and read  
English, Russian and Arabic.  
I would like to become a  
psychiatrist or a film editor. I  
have always loved writing, and  
sharing with friends."



"Colliding Thoughts" by  
Victoria Gomez, 7, Mexican-  
Ecuadorian-American, Calif.  
Inspired by Pablo Picasso.

## Mother Earth

They were prosperous once.  
They grew and grew almighty,  
spread across what was vast  
and lived upon what was sightly.

I nurtured them as much as I could,  
and they bred new animals upon my crust;  
they bored into me yet I cared not,  
for their progress, my suffering was a must.

I think the change came upon a faithful day,  
when the crops were abandoned, left to decay.  
They forged from me what they had found,  
to fire upon one another, murder bound.

It came as quick and swift as light,  
when they stopped to look with delight;  
stopped complimenting a crying baby's lungs  
but instead made sure some man's air was wrung.

They fought one another with fists of steel,  
with rods of fire—for tale-spun honor.  
They killed one another for a simple reason;  
the flags they made were differently colored.

Now I sit and think, devoid of life.  
I was full of animation, a vibrant community;  
one with art and love, as passion ran rife,  
'till the day they learned to look past strife.

—Christopher Fleihan, 16, from Canada, lives in Turkey.

Amera loves  
what New York  
City has to offer.  
What about  
you? What are  
your dreams and  
goals? What's  
your inspiration?  
Where do you  
imagine yourself  
in the next ten to  
fifteen years?

—Editors.



## Poems Are Where the Heart Is

“Alright class, let’s settle down now.” Teacher is brisk, but pleasant. She has learned not to say, “Now class, today we’re going to learn about... so let’s pay attention.” Whatever the subject, such announcements are met with groans and rolling eyes. Today, moreover, she is experimenting.

Teacher reads a poem and asks if anyone has ever heard it before. She wonders to herself, who has heard it this time! The discussion proceeds in familiar style.

With bravado, “I think it’s dumb.”

“I think it’s sweet,” followed by giggles.

Then contemptuously, “That’s ‘cause you’re dumb.”

Teacher suggests that comments be limited to the poem and not classmates. She hands out copies of the poem and calls on pupils at random to read out loud. Most of the children manage fairly well. Poems, teacher tells the class, can be about anything, anything at all. One student remembers seeing a peacock at the zoo. Another thinks of races cars and dragons that breathe fire. Pleased, Teacher assigns everyone to write a poem or find one at home to bring to class. The class responds with moans, protests, and pitiful cries. One boy mutters, “There’s no poems at my house.”

“Of course there are,” Teacher contradicts, stiffly cheerful. “There are poems everywhere. For instance, you could write about the grass that grows in front of your house.” The boy snorts, “There’s no grass at my house, just broken glass. That’s a poem,” he jeers. “There’s no grass, just broken glass.”

The class agrees noisily: “Yeah, that’s how it is!”

Teacher looks at the boy for a moment, then writes his poem on the board. “That’s a good poem, a strong poem.” Then she asks, “What games do you play after school? You can write a poem about baseball, or...”

Another child interrupts, “He plays kick the can!” The children shriek with delight.

“Okay,” says Teacher, “Let’s all make up a poem about kicking the can, right now.” The children grin at one another and start to yell—

“I can kick the can harder than you can!”

“Kick it down the street with your big feet!”

“Watch it roll down the hole!”

As Teacher writes, the class’s enthusiasm gets louder and zanier. Teacher turns and holds up her hands.

“Simmer down.” She waits until the noise swirls down like dust settling. “It’s a great silly poem, but this will do.” She writes the title, “Silly Poem,” over the jumbled verse. Teacher glances at her clock and talks faster.

“You can write about something that makes you happy.”

“Food!” blurts a voice from the back of the room.

“Money!”

“My dog.” Uncomplimentary remarks about this dog are answered with equally unflattering comments of a more personal nature.

“Red ribbons.”

Delighted, Teacher turns to a child with long braids, one of the quiet ones. “Red ribbons,” the girl repeats. “Red ribbons make me feel good. When I’m happy, I’m happy like red ribbons.”

“That’s really beautiful,” smiles Teacher. Most of the girls in the class signify their approval. The boys get sillier with high-pitched chirping.

The bell rings. Teacher calls out over the unruly scramble, “Don’t forget to bring a poem tomorrow.”

Alone in the quiet classroom, Teacher copies into her notebook the nonsense poem. She puts out of her mind a vision of bare earth strewn with debris where poems fight to survive. The lesson went fairly well, she thinks. Smiling, she writes in her notebook, “I’m happy like red ribbons.”

—Sylvia Khan is a retired child welfare worker. Now, she spends her time as a storyteller in New York.

### *A Flower*

A flower is a living organism, but it does not move.  
It is beautiful, but it has no face.

Its colors are infinite like a rainbow.

A field of flowers is like a sunset with no sky.

It is more striking and mesmerizing than anything  
humans have ever seen.

Beauty cannot be made.

—Sam P. Whitcombe, grade 5, California. YHA entry.

## Cultural Collage: *Visiting Palestine*

Visiting Palestine, I saw so many values highly appreciated by the majority of the people there. Palestinian culture consists of different cuisines, religions, languages, and traditions, just like any other culture. However, my country is under occupation at this time. Through all of the war going on, the people there still love each other like siblings. You see people helping the elderly by carrying their groceries, or by helping them cross the street. Those who are barely getting by will pay other people's bus fares. The children still go to school and the adults still work just as hard to become successful. They have faith that their country will one day be free. Faith and dedication can be visible throughout other cultures, however, I feel that they are especially strong in my culture, as everyone is suffering through the same things and working together to get through the war and live a happy life.

A significant problem that Palestinians face every day is crossing the several checkpoints that separate different cities. One of the major checkpoints in the entire country is the one separating Jerusalem from the West Bank. On the other side of the checkpoint lie different universities, hospitals, shopping malls, and restaurants. However, it can sometimes be very difficult to get to the other side of this barrier. Standing in line for hours to cross that checkpoint has given me the chance to witness some of the every day suffering of people there. The ambulance would be stopped and delayed, the guards paying no attention to the very sick patient that needed immediate assistance. Some women have ended up giving birth at the checkpoint because they were held up at the check point and couldn't make it to the hospital in time. Students get their bags or clothes checked randomly without any explanation as to why. At times, students do get to their classes late, or just miss their entire school day. I would see their books scattered everywhere. The reactions of the students picking up their books surprised me. Instead of picking up their books with frustration, they would have looks of pride, not letting the frustration get to their heads.

Despite these hardships that they face every day, Palestine is still known as one of the most well educated countries in the Middle East. It is easily visible that the Palestinians are determined to succeed. None of



these obstacles would hinder them from achieving their goals, whether it be education, a successful job, or even getting closer to their families.

While visiting Palestine, we often drove along the West Bank Wall which separates the Palestinian territories and the Israeli territories. The artwork on this wall is a perfect example of how faithful and dedicated Palestinians are, constantly standing up for each other and being optimistic. The art was tremendously powerful. It was filled with graffiti, pictures, sayings, names, and drawings. It was easy to tell that the creators of these works of art had experienced so many ups and downs in their lives. All of the artwork had one thing in common; every piece of artwork told a story. However, one piece stood out to me the most. It was massive and obviously took much effort and thought. At the very top, near the middle of the eight-meter-high concrete wall, the painting said the words **"Free Palestine"** in black, red, and green graffiti letters. Right underneath those graffiti words, was a painting that made it look like there was a huge hole in the wall. Gazing through the hole was Handala, the ten-year-old Palestinian refugee who was drawn by cartoonist, Naji Al-Ali. This piece of art symbolizes the faith of a nation that hopes to one day see a free Palestine.

I believe that faith and dedication are my culture's greatest values that keep them moving forward and overcoming the frustration they face every day under occupation. They have faith that the barriers including the West Bank Wall and the checkpoints will be taken down forever, and that the war will be over soon. The Palestinians are perfect examples of people who will do whatever it takes to do what they love and to fulfill their dreams. These are the people I look up to.

—Sawsan Alkhalili, Palestinian American, grade 8, Ohio.

## Three Words in English

**J**oy: “Yes. No. Toilet.”

These are the three words I can say in English. My name in Chinese is Chu Huan-yue. Chu is my family’s name. It means “red.” In China, red is the color of good fortune. Huan-yue means “joyful.” Now that I am here with my parents in New York, my name is Joy Chu because the Americans put their family names last. My name is prettier in Chinese.

Three days ago, my parents came to get me at the airport. I hadn’t seen them for ten years. Until last week, I lived with my grandparents in Beijing. Beijing is a huge city, nothing like this village where my parents have their restaurant, the Shining Dragon.

The best thing here in New York is that I have my own little room. I don’t have to share with aunties or cousins. The worst thing is that I don’t know anyone, not even my parents. Their apartment is above the restaurant and it smells like stir-fry. My clean clothes smell like stir fry, too.

In the morning, my father takes me to my new school. He fills out papers and gives the secretary my immigration documents. I will take bus 361 back to the restaurant. He leaves and the secretary takes me to my classroom. The grade six teacher is a tall lady. She shows me a place to put my coat and backpack, but I will not let go of them.

“No,” I say in English. “No.”

I sit in the desk next to a girl with curly brown hair. I touch the necklace that my grandmother gave me and tell myself I will not cry. The students and the teacher sound like chattering birds.

**Natalie:** The new girl, Joy, is scared. She’s holding on to her coat with one hand like it’s a life preserver. Her other hand is clenched around the thing on her necklace. When she lets go for a second, I see that it’s a gold locket.

“Natalie,” says Mrs. Kelly, our teacher, “I’d like you to be Joy’s buddy for a few days.” She moves our desks next to each other.

Why me? Mrs. Kelly thinks I’m responsible just because I don’t make trouble in class and I turn in my homework on time. At home, I never do anything right. Ever since my dad began working nights, Mom’s been on my case.

As soon as I get off the bus, it’s “Natalie, clean up this mess! I work all day and come home to a pig sty!” or “Take out the trash!” or “Haven’t you changed Anton’s diaper yet?”

Still, I’d rather be me any day than this girl, Joy. My dad would say that she looks like a deer caught in the headlights.

Joy sits so still through Language Arts and Social Studies that I check to see if she’s still breathing. Her black, shiny hair falls in two perfect French braids that start at her forehead and hang down past her shoulders. Her jeans are new. The collar of her blouse that sticks out over her coat is embroidered with yellow flowers. I’d like to have a blouse like that.

It’s time for lunch, so I take Joy to the cafeteria. I point at her, “you,” and move my hands as if I’m eating.

Joy says, “No.” She opens her locket and stares at tiny photos of an old Chinese man and woman.

I finish my cheese sandwich and chips. Then I take Joy outside for recess. She sits on the bench like a statue, holding her coat and her locket.

My friends Maria and Tessa come over. “Come on, Natalie. Let’s play four-square.”

I want to go with them but Joy won’t get off the bench.

“What’s wrong with her?” says Tessa.

“She’s scared,” I say.

“Scared of what?” says Maria.

“Oh, probably everything,” I say, because I remember my first frightening day of second grade, after my family came here from Ukraine. I couldn’t speak English and I had to learn a whole new alphabet.

When recess is over, Joy follows me into the building. She pulls on my sleeve and whispers something I can’t hear.

“What?” I say, leaning closer.

“Toilet.”

“OK,” I say, and I show her the girls’ bathroom. I get a drink at the water fountain while I’m waiting for her. Then we go to the gym for P.E. Joy watches while we all do warm-ups and play dodge ball.



**Joy:** This girl with the curly brown hair has been kind, but I am so tired. Finally it is almost time to go home. I put on my coat. When I reach for the locket that my grandmother gave me, it is gone. I feel all around my blouse. It isn't there. I shake my coat. I look around the desk.

I must not lose my locket. I get down on the floor. I see shoes and broken pencils and pieces of paper, but no locket. Now I can't stop my tears.

The students are staring at me. The girl with the curly brown hair makes a worried face and speaks to me in words I don't know. I lift the empty gold chain around my neck. Maybe she will understand.

She takes a pencil and draws a lopsided locket on her notebook cover.

"Yes," I say. "Yes, yes."

She runs out of the room fast. I follow her but when I get to the doorway, I don't see her. I slide down onto the floor, crying. The girl comes running back and then kneels down beside me. In her hand is my locket. She helps me put the chain through the gold ring. Then she tightens the ring with her teeth.

A bell rings loudly. We stand up and the girl takes my hand. She walks with me to my bus no. 361. On the way, I am thinking hard to remember the words in English. Before I get into the bus, I find them.

"Thank you," I say. "Thank you."

—Kim Ellis, ELL teacher, New York.

## *The Velvet Rope*

I've been bound by the velvet rope.

Tangled.

Like a frightened fly mislead by the deceptive shimmer  
of the spider's web.

The rope is as weak as the sinner's will,  
and it can shephard a soul on the road traveling towards  
damnation.

I desperetely yearned for the ambrosial scents of oak and  
lemon balm so that I could be sated.

I craved the realization that my aspirations could be fulfilled,  
like an exhausted Olympic athlete majestically hoisting up  
his golden triumph.

I've had shards of glass stickin' out my skin  
vainly trying to puncture and pierce my hopes  
of leading the world with people of different shades.

What if Adam was made from Eve's ribs?

Would Eve let Adam vote?

At times I felt the stars were leading me nowhere,  
and that the moon wouldn't follow the sun.

I trudged through the sand blasted by the vibrant glare  
of the sun in isolation—  
finally, I was cleansed of my sins in the waters of redemption.  
I was reborn.

Y.H.A. Entry by Patrick Davidson, 13, New York.

## *On the Banks of the River*

On the banks of the river  
A woodland flourished year after year  
Vibrant with breeze, bright with flower  
Cheerful with bird, lively with deer

Her greenery breathed with vigor  
Turning smog into fresh air  
Her trees stood erect without fear  
Strengthening the earth under

Every morning I was drawn to her  
Enthralled by her lush verdure  
I relished in her invigorating atmosphere  
And for the day ahead. I became stronger

On a hot bustling day  
Bulldozers tossed her glamor away  
Commercial projects forced her to give way

Suddenly, her sylvan charm fell in disarray

Her foliage perished—it once kept the sky clear  
Her woods vanished—they once guarded against twister  
Her dynamics gone—they once brought us cheer  
And life in the river town was changed forever

Many times, when I wistfully come by  
I cannot help but shout *why*  
But the stony high-rises that tower the sky  
Cannot answer my outcry

In my heart I keep a prayer  
I pray for all to cherish nature's wonder  
For there was once a land so dear  
On the bank of the river

—Chris Wang, 15, California. "As an Asian American, I feel  
extremely grateful that I live in a land of diversity." YHA entry.



# 2015 Skipping Stones Youth Honor Awards



## Our Hearty Congratulations to the 2015 Winners:

★ **Sophie Xu**, 16, Illinois ★ **Isabella Ronchetti**, 13, Virginia \*\* **Students at Na‘au**, Hawai‘i \*\* **Nicole Chan**, 15, and **Alex Lam**, 15, of Hong Kong  
★ **Nicole Weinrauch**, 13, Singapore ★ **Angela Liu**, 16, California ★ **Ryan Yi**, 16, California ★ **Elaine Park**, 16, Washington ★ **Karishma Muthukumar**, 15, California \*\* **Lindsey Mutz**, 16, **Raul Dutta**, 14, **Doug Roche**, 17, all from Michigan & **Abbie Menard**, grade 8, Virginia

(Note: \*\* denotes joint winners)

## *Samsara: The Yellow River*

The Yellow River spans out in front of me,  
Bordered by endless miles of emerald grass, where camels strut.  
As the welcoming singing of the Mongolians embraces me,  
The aroma of the ginger and mutton fills the cool valley air.  
White Mongolian yurts with adorned beetroot red doors dot the valley  
The “Green Eden in the Desert,” Tonghu Grassland.  
I listen to the Yellow River gurgle as it meanders deeper into the valley,  
Blended with the warm and spirited singing voices of the boatmen.  
Women wearing colorful embroidered shoes rest under maidenhair trees.  
Ancient stones bridges stretch over aquamarine water.  
A Chinese water village frozen in time  
The “Museum of Chinese Bridges,” Luzhi water town.  
I follow the churning white capped waves along the Zhongyinbao Lake  
Down to the craggy alabaster white cliffs of Ningxia  
To the place where the Qing Ming Festival was born.  
The largest Taoist temple in China hangs off a steep, majestic cliff  
Over 300 meters above the ground  
The “Silky Mountain,” Ningxia.

I chase the sound of the Yellow River going through the mountains to ancient Lou Yang.  
Here, 5,500 years ago, inscriptions describing treatment for illnesses were carved on rocks.  
I climb up 99 steps to see Fengxian Temple where the majestic Nishyanda Buddha sits  
And wander through the Poem Corridor Cave carved with Chinese and Japanese verses.  
On the cave ceiling, a magenta lotus symbolizes the importance of love  
The Longmen Grottoes, Lou Yang.

I see the breakers thunder against the narrow shores escaping through the Taihang Mountains  
to the opening to the Bohai Sea.  
As the crimson sun reflects in the estuary,  
Rippling jade crops give way to sapphire blue waters.  
Tomorrow, the water cycle will continue unbroken  
Flowing in the Buddhist wheel of *Samsara*, the wheel of life.

**Notes:** Samsara: The Buddhist name for the wheel of life.

Qing Ming Festival: Tomb-sweeping festival

—Nicole Chan, 15, Hong Kong.



# The Making of Me

## *One. Hawthorne popsicles only exist in memories.*

You would think my year in an American public high school would “Americanize” me. But I have a collection of instances that prove otherwise. I mutter the quadratic formula in Chinese, I say “Hi” to my teachers in corridors, I read books that aren’t vampire romances. These were things I did, yet my American peers didn’t do. It made me acutely aware of the fact that I am different from them; I am not American. I take pride in these differences, and they are a constant reminder of my past life in China.

My memories of Beijing are the flashing of neon signs in Xidan that left bright streaks in the darkness behind my closed eyes, the red bricks of my middle school that were sun baked in the hot days after finals, the warm scent of roasted sweet potatoes that lingered amidst the pale gray bricks of hutongs, and the hawthorn and green bean popsicles my best friend and I shared that numbed our lips. These memories shine more clearly after they were thrown further and further into the past. I am proud I can recite Tang poetry, that my values coincide with Confucian beliefs, that I belong to the thousands of years of history that is a tangle of dynasties, the roaring Yellow River, and the slow spread of calligraphy ink in a china bowl. I guess I am Chinese to the core.

## *Two. The Boy Who Lived does not meet some Chinese pop star.*

One day I remembered that my last three years of primary school were spent in Beijing. My classmates were the completely “Chinese” kids, the kids born and raised in Beijing, who had watched the Monkey King cartoons and covered their ears every year to block out the bangs from firecrackers during the Spring Festival. I didn’t know the name of the singer with his hair dyed chocolate brown whose picture they stuck with pink tape on the inside cover of their notebooks. I didn’t know the sappy Chinese romance novels with perfectly drawn anime guys on the front that they talked about. They didn’t know the happenings of Stars Hollow or Central Park which I studiously followed every weekend. They didn’t know “The Boy Who Lived” and his nemesis “He Who Must Not Be Named,” whose lines I knew by heart.

Before this memory unraveled, I believed I belonged to China and its culture. Then why am I different from the people who were truly born and raised Chinese?

## *Three. My friends are weird, like me.*

Lu used to live in the very building where I live now, the one with beige carpets on the bedroom floors and windows that showed where the lake curved round to the other side of the horizon. Marie spoke in a flawless New York accent, while Tolstoy and Orwell lay on her nightstand. On Christina’s locker door, there is a picture of her surrounded by a few smiling Germans. Behind them is the crisp whiteness of the Alps, a backdrop that reappears every holiday. Norman, with his Beats headphones constantly pumping out Coldplay, probably has to get a new passport soon, his current one is so filled visa stamps. These were my four close friends, and we met in a classroom that sat squarely in central Beijing, within one subway stop from the Forbidden City. Even though now I am shivering at the other side of the world in Chicago, they are all still only an iMessage away.

Were these the people I belonged with? The in-betweeners, the ones born between two cultures, caught in a clash of ideas, our memories a simultaneous sunrise that started in Beijing and ended somewhere thousands upon thousands of miles away?

## *Four. The making of me.*

If culture is a collection of our past, customs, and values, then I am a myriad of things.

I am my experiences: I am my three bright December summers in Canberra, Australia, my six crowded, noisy, vibrant years in China, and my placid days in America. I am the books I read: the Austens, the Woolfs, the Li Bais and Aileen Zhangs. I am my beliefs and values: the Confucian ideas of “jun zi” mixed in with the “feminism” and “reality pedagogy” that was discussed in my 11th grade AP English classroom. I am undefinable me.

—Qianyue (Sophie) Xu, 16, Chinese American, Illinois. See her cover art.



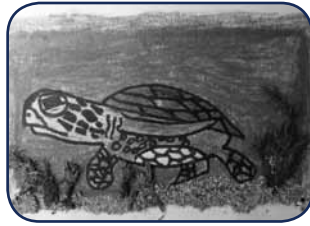
# The Na'au Students, Hawai'i

Also see page 35 for six art collages in full color.

## Flippers

Honu, o Honu  
sing me a song, please—  
a song of your endangerment  
in the waters of Hawai'i nei,  
a song of the beauty of your olive green shell  
with gleaming citron spots  
and your flippers with gleaming hexagons  
that allow you to wander  
through the reef and enjoy a delicious  
meal of green seagrass and algae,  
a song of escaping your predators  
like seabirds, crabs, and especially man whom  
you must flee from with your strong flipper-like limbs,  
a song of your mating and how you lay  
your 110 to 115 eggs that hatch  
in the sacred sands of our 'āina  
as your babies crawl out of their sturdy eggs.  
Honu, o Honu,  
sing me a song  
of your mystic adventures in the rolling waters  
of my ko'u home na O'ahu

—Eleanor Nakasone-Amaguin, grade 5, Japanese Hawaiian.



## The Music's Rhythm

When moon rose to the sapphire sky,  
I paused as I heard music in the hallway.  
My older brother Dylan, who has autism,  
sang along heartily to the Carpenters CD.  
Such ear-splitting music  
and Dylan clapping along with the music's rhythm.  
Dancing, he accidentally tripped over his backpack.  
Dylan is not a great dancer.

I cried so hard, too much laughter—  
I curled up on the ground.  
“Are you okay?” I asked, standing up.  
I gave him my hand  
and dusted off his clothes,  
as I danced along to the music with Dylan.

Art and poem by Dane Kaulukou-Chang, gr. 7, age 12.



## Calligraphy of Ancient Poems

The people I come from invented  
the compass to tell direction.  
The grandfathers worked long hours as blacksmiths  
smelting ore and perfecting the compass.  
The people I come from mix rice flour and water  
into flexible dough to make noodles.  
The aunties spend days preparing noodle dishes  
like *chow fun* and oxtail soup with noodles.  
The people I come from cleaned house  
every month to shoo out the bad luck.  
The mothers tidied up  
the messy house to kill the evil spirits.  
the people I come from made silk  
to trade across the Silk Road.  
The fathers harvested caterpillar cocoons  
to turn into fleecy soft thread.  
The people I come from  
harvested rice to feed their villages.  
The brothers spent long hours  
in the rice fields harvesting grains of their staple food.  
The people I come from  
made paper to paint portraits of famous rulers.  
The cousins crushed berries to make paint  
to create calligraphy of the ancient poems.  
I climb the mountains to study the world  
just as my ancestors built  
one of the seven wonders of the world—  
The Great Wall of China.

—Lauren Chong, grade 7, Chinese Hawaiian. Lauren adds: “The poem expresses who my ancestors are and the great feats they accomplished.”



The Sturdy Koa Tree  
by Winston Freitas, grade 5.



## *I Won't Hold You in My Hands*

I release you,  
my crazy and insane shame.  
You were my beloved  
and hated twin,  
but now, I let you free in the light,  
so your darkness  
cannot be around me.  
I don't know you as myself.  
I release you  
with all the hope  
I have in my life.  
I am not afraid to be heavy.  
I am not afraid to have joy.  
I am not afraid to be disliked.  
I am not afraid to share my thoughts.  
I am not afraid to be powerful.  
I am not afraid to be jubilant.  
I am not afraid to be who I am.  
I take myself back  
from you, shame.  
You are not part of my life anymore.  
I won't hold you in my hands.  
You can't live in my body,  
my voice,  
or my heart.  
But come here, shame.  
I am alive,  
and you are so afraid  
of being invisible.

—Jaida Lyn Kamaunu, grade 5. Jaida adds:  
“I wrote this poem so that I can just release my  
feelings of inadequacy and just be who I am.”



## *Kupuna Song*

*I pa 'a i kona kūpuna 'a 'ole kākou e puka.*  
Had our ancestress died in bearing our grandparent,  
we would not have come forth.  
If it had ended with her, you would not be here.

—Mary Kawena Pukui

I sing of my kūpuna who taught me stories of ancient Hawai'i:  
the thunderous mountains beneath the enchanted sky,  
the brave kingdom that King Kamehameha the Great united as one,  
gentle native Hawaiians who suffered the loss of their gods,  
the sacred death of Pauahi who blessed  
the Hawaiian children with education.

I sing of my kūpuna who taught me of the ancient ones:  
sweet Papa who gave birth to Hāloa,  
fiery Pele who forms a new island called Lō'ihī,  
moonlit Hi'iaka who showed love and passion for her sisters,  
stormy Kamapua'a who roams and uproots the 'aina of the rainforests.  
I sing of my kūpuna who taught me to speak and write 'ōlelo Hawai'i:  
the pure voice of my native language touches my heart,  
the ancient words that I hear them speak,  
the divine hand that searches the unique book of Hawaiian proverbs,  
their clear songs written down forever.

—Aaron Kia 'ioka 'ikemālamalama Hanohano-Hashimoto, grade 4.

## *Vietnamese Dan Anh*

Bà nội, my lovely Grandmother, is like an áo dài she wears to parties,  
her beautiful dress sewn with silky ruby fabric.

Bà nội, my lovely Grandmother, is like a bon that smells fragrant  
in her garden in front of her Diamond Head house.

Bà nội, my lovely Grandmother, is soft like Vietnamese music  
that is played with the Đàn Nhị, an ancient string instrument.

Ông nội, my sweet Grandfather, is like a goi ga--  
golden fried crispy mushrooms and carrots wrapped in rice paper.

Ông nội, my sweet Grandfather, is like a chim  
in graceful flight as it flutters over the tall hau trees in Ala Moana Park.

Ông nội, my sweet Grandfather, is like a bánh xèo pancake  
with lots of shrimp in it that I eat at my grandma and grandpa's  
house when we go to there.

My Vietnamese đàn anh pass down their traditions to me,  
so I can teach and pass them down to my children  
to keep our culture alive.

—Art and poem by Lily Truong, grade 3, age 9, Vietnamese Hawaiian.

## The Beauty of Giving *by Angela Liu, 16*

In the summer of 2013, I served on a mission trip to a blind school in Zhengzhou, China. Far from the comforts of my home in San Marino, I brought fourteen instrumental recorders to the north-central Chinese city, where I met people who lived in overcrowded dorms, dirty bathrooms, and musty cafeterias. Immediately, I realized that I possessed a thousand times more of the material luxuries than these students.

During the evenings, I taught the students how to play “Amazing Grace” on their recorders. All of them were either completely blind or severely sight-impaired. They had no prior exposure to musical instruments, let alone studying music, or even understanding the concept of a musical note. I felt called to use my musical skills to open their world while planting seeds of opportunities.

In the summer of 2014, I traveled a second time to China, to the Beijing Blind School, with new teachers and even a stronger desire to make a difference. I felt more comfortable teaching this time because not only had my Chinese improved since the past year, but I also knew I had the constant support of all the teachers around me. Furthermore, I felt eager to learn from the students and was inspired to see that even though they have no sight, they can still have happy spirits and open minds. Once again, armed with instruments and a how-to manual, I taught the students how to play “Amazing Grace” on the recorder.

I was more than excited to see that some of the students from the Zhengzhou school had transferred

over to this school in Beijing.

Hong Jin-Jin, a 16-year-old student with severe vision impairment who had learned the recorder from me in Zhengzhou, had musically improved and personally matured since last year. Although he has long since mastered the recorder, he still came to all of my recorder classes this year and helped the beginners. He became my teaching assistant this trip, guiding the students who were having trouble and giving demonstrations. Jin-Jin shared with me that he had started to learn the bamboo flute a couple weeks ago, and takes music classes every Wednesday. I was ecstatic that he took the initiative to further the little amount of music that I taught him last year. Learning the recorder sparked something in him—self-confidence to take a risk. Music added another beautiful dimension to his life; it became a part of his identity. That was my “aha” moment. Instantly, I realized why I went to China again, and why I want to keep going year after year. It’s the discovery that giving really is better than receiving. The biggest reward was to see the seeds of hope I planted bear fruit. It meant witnessing a transformed life.

In 2013, I founded the Blind Light Foundation to support the hopes and joys of students with vision impairments. To continue to encourage these blind students, I hosted a benefit concert featuring several student performances in both 2013 and 2014 at the Steinway Piano Gallery. We raised more than \$36,000 to help transform the lives of blind students. The money was split between schools in Beijing and Zhengzhou, and also the Braille Institute. It helped pay for the living expenses and tuition of some 200 students.

I keep in contact with students online and look forward to returning to China again next year.

*Angela Liu (wearing shorts) trained about 25 blind students at Beijing Blind School in China to play recorder. The boy right behind Angela is Hong Jin-Jin, Angela’s teaching assistant. The group successfully performed “Amazing Grace” at the school auditorium on June 12, 2014.*



## *When Winter Falls*

She lets out a bubbly chortle  
As she slides through the pebbles,  
Unafraid of her path being obstructed.  
With her playful spray, she greets the ferns and  
Tosses her cascading waves and wispy locks.  
Her silver highlights reflect the glistening light of the sun;  
Blazing, beautiful, and twinkling  
Like white gems of pure starlight.  
Giggling gleefully, she both leaps  
To the lingering pools below and reaches  
For their welcoming depths.  
Casting misty canvases on which she  
Paints arcs of prismatic colors,  
She reaches her arms down  
To embrace the stillness.  
Even the tallest trees stiffen in acceptance as  
Icy tendrils crawl across the compliant earth  
To embed themselves in the security of the cliffs.  
The ferns and brushes blanch  
And turn an unearthly white as if  
Life itself has turned cold and uninviting.  
The once lustrous trees and joyous birds  
Shiver beneath bitter winter's breath.  
Her chilling aura and piercing icicles like bared fangs  
Turn her blood and eyes cold.  
She freezes the life out of everything around her, and  
From the emptiness of her heart,  
A palace of ice emerges.  
Here, no one and nothing can stay for long;  
All life and love is put on hold.

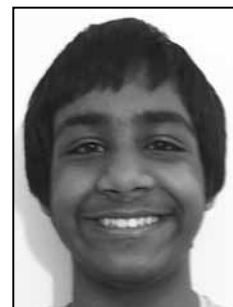
—*Angela Liu, 16, is also an Orchestra flutist, California.*



## ✧ *Forsaken into Understanding* ✧

We sat on an island  
he and I  
forsaken by the war  
his different face  
stared back at mine  
as we sat upon pillars of sand  
and dust  
smoke spiraled from fire into air  
his gun's bullets under my flesh  
and my bullets under his  
bullets of hatred seeded by  
the most cunning of  
billboard painters  
his brush bringing me here  
in front of a man I was trained to hate  
and we spoke  
like two drunk men in a bar  
I English and he Japanese  
but both human

—*Raul Dutta, 14, Michigan.*  
*He enjoys mathematics, sciences,  
programming and writing.*



## **2016 Youth Honor Awards**

### **Send Us Your Best Creations!**

We invite your creative stories, poems, essays, and original art for publication. Share your ideas, experiences, dreams and visions. Prose: *1000 words, max.*

Poems: *30 lines.* Include a cover letter with your submissions! Send your award entries by June 25!



# You Can't Save the World in a Week: Tree-Planting in Mongolia

The smog over Beijing cast a haze over the metropolis. The city sat behind a slightly out-of-focus lens, the air and the jostling crowds harsh on my delicate American frame. I developed the sense that the city did not acknowledge my presence, much less welcome it.

The monachopsis—the feeling of being out of place—was to be expected. I had been skeptical when my father walked into my room two months prior and announced that I would be planting trees in Inner Mongolia. It was part of a week-long United Nations campaign to combat desertification in the steppes, but finding myself trundling towards the heart of the Kubuqi Desert drove a sense of displacement into me.

The UN had never recruited high schoolers before, and throwing together a group of teenagers who hadn't labored a day in their lives was not a very effective way to confront any environmental crisis. Our program leader, a hardy man named Kwon, seemed unaware of this glaring inefficiency, convinced that we would make great strides. He had been leading expeditions into the Kubuqi for ten years, so dubious as I felt, I tried to share in his enthusiasm.

After a night of self-imposed positive thinking, I set out with the intention of bringing my “real change” to the steppes. I focused on maintaining my morale as I toiled, but every sapling was but a pinprick on the hide of a great beast. Could our ragtag group really help these Mongolians?

As I despaired, a volunteer from Mongolia told me that moving an inch was better than standing still. Such a simplistic notion was barely convincing, but I admired his tenacity. The war against the desert needed idealistic individuals like him, not me. Perhaps another man like him should have taken my place.

The numbers only affirmed the thought. An average Mongolian worker made four thousand dollars a year. Transporting my sunburned backside to this desert had cost north of five thousand. A year's worth of labor was being squandered on my spending five days staring out at the torrid dunes and wondering how in the world anyone was going to seed it all.

One year for five days. Someone was getting duped here.

I met that someone at a little farmhouse where an elderly couple lived near camp. Kwon bragged that the program's trees allowed them to live here, but to me, staking everything on those flimsy leaves was insanity. The work of my two hands couldn't give this couple the security they deserved. No one's could.

I left the desert a week later with the impression that I had only managed to plant my own frustration in the sand. Kwon congratulated the volunteers on a job well done, but the words fell on deaf ears. The locals here were no better off.

By now I was yearning for home, and when I arrived in the city of Baotou as part of a home-stay program, I met a Chinese teenager who more than shared my sentiments. Ho Shun Lee was an NBA fan who dreamed of living in America one day. It was all he talked about, as if his very identity was carved out of the desire to leave China's dusty atmosphere behind forever.

We spoke about the trees too, but I knew he only asked about the reason for my visit out of courtesy. All Ho Shun wanted was to leave the very place I was trying to save.

Suddenly those trees seemed smaller than ever, their little branches hidden by the unceasing reaches of the Kubuqi. No one here would ever see or appreciate them.

Two days later my volunteer group was back in Beijing. As the smog enveloped us once again, I stared irritably at the sky. It seemed more polluted than ever.

I spent that final day in Beijing wondering if I was expected to return home with some great epiphany. Even my footprints would soon be engulfed by the shifting sands. As we returned to the airport, Kwon asked for my motivation to come to China.

“I came here thinking I could make a difference,” I said. “But I couldn't fix any of your problems.”

“They're your problems too,” Kwon reprimanded. “Didn't burning out in the







Kubuqi teach you anything?"

"That I'm not cut out for volunteer work," I replied drily.

"You can't save the world in one week," Kwon reminded me. "My father knew that when he started this program, and I'm starting to understand it too."

I thought about Kwon's words as I boarded the plane and waved goodbye. Eccentric as he was, the man was no fool. He saw some value in my time here even if I didn't. If my personal impact wasn't important, what was?

Perhaps he saw a different kind of progress, one that wasn't tangible or green.

Maybe my involvement was not solely a question of practicality, but of understanding. Merely sending a donation to Mongolia wouldn't have taught me how much it hurts to live in a place where the desert consumes everything. It was only by sweating beside the Mongolians that I was able to understand that anyone would suffer under such conditions.

Perhaps one day another American teenager would come here and think that his work was unprofitable, but he would already be one inch ahead of where I was. I closed my eyes and thought about the thousands of volunteers before and after me, each adding his or her own inch year after year, and suddenly my effort didn't seem like something insignificant, but part of a grand whole.

You can't save the world in one week. I failed to understand that because I judged "progress" through my own lim-

## Ode to Chinese Dragon

Soaring through the milky clouds above the Ming Dynasty  
Its one hundred and seventeen vermilion scales  
Gleaming like carp in the golden sunlight  
The creature rules over heaven and earth.

The most magnificent of all creation,  
With the whiskers of a rat,  
The wit of a monkey,  
The teeth of a tiger,  
None is its equal.

With a flick of its giant claws,  
Violent tornadoes form, tempestuous waves churn in the Yellow Sea,  
Storms lash the coast of Guang Dong,  
As peals of thunder reverberate through Mount Huang Shan.  
Great temples are built to bring offerings of sandalwood incense.  
Smoke curls into the air as the sounds of prayers echo through the temple.

Four reptilian rulers dominate the sky  
Shen Long, the weather god and god of all dragons  
Tian Long, the celestial guard of the cloud covered peaks of Mt. Tai  
Jiao Long, king and leader of all aquatic animals in the Yellow Sea  
Fei Long, rider of mist over the paddy fields of Yunnan Province

Only the most honored of mighty imperial emperors  
Can aspire to re-incarnate into such a magnificent creature.  
As the disincarnate spirit of the emperor rises from the earth,  
His robe transforms into red and gold plated scales,  
And his hands into curved claws like the talons of an eagle.  
Freed of his earthly form,  
He soars off into the milky clouds above the Ming Dynasty.

—A. Lam, 15, Hong Kong. "The poem praises and describes features of the Chinese Dragon, a powerful yet benevolent creature. The poem is structured in a way so that it seems like a never-ending loop: The dragon is born soaring through the mighty clouds, it comes down as an emperor to rule, and it dies and is reborn as another mighty dragon."



ited perspective. I had seen the small tree sitting out in the Kubuqi, but my eyes had missed the countless hands that had come together to nurture it.

To me, it was only one week. But to the tree, the heart behind its care was constant.

—Ryan Yi, 16, Korean American, California. Ryan is also proficient in Korean. The two photos show Ryan planting trees in Mongolia.

## *I Don't Remember*

Hearing a rule saying  
that you need to kill  
a teenager because he had  
Skittles and a drink in his  
hands.

I don't know why anyone would  
confuse a Taser with a gun.  
I thought our "heroes" were  
supposed to be  
joining

forces to fight crime and  
save the day, not to cause crime.

I don't know if I can feel safe  
in a country that causes harm to  
different colors... We should be  
together

helping each other, not mourning,  
grieving, and even shouting our cries  
in harmony,

the cries for blood. The cries for  
war, when there are too many people that  
are saying, "I can't do this  
anymore..."

—Abbie Menard, grade 8, European American, Virginia.  
Abbie adds: "I combined references of the incidences like  
Trayvon Martin, Oscar Grant—unarmed black victims of  
police brutality. Hopefully, the reader will notice the small  
message summing up the entire poem on the side: I don't  
remember hands joining together in harmony anymore..."

## *Alone*

A child soldier has a face  
Two ears, a mouth, a pair of eyes  
As do the rest of us, so why don't we hear their cries?  
When I was a boy, I used to be afraid of flying  
Now I'm 17, hearing about children dying  
What do I have to fear for?  
While there are these kids overseas  
Whose lives are blood and gore  
I used to think I was meaningless and alone  
And here are these kids awaiting death in Sierra Leone  
We spend our time on Earth in an effort to make life count  
But if we fail to look after our brothers  
Regardless of where they're from  
Then what should one expect to become?  
If we fail to protect each other  
Do we really deserve thy kingdom come?  
Our lives have different stories  
That's why this world's so great  
But there are still kids out there  
Who have yet to experience life's glories  
All humans are the same, which sometimes we forget  
Just like the kids with guns, we've been both happy and upset  
It's evident in this world that its leaders want to control  
The extent some go for this has taken its toll  
A child soldier sighs, cries and dies  
We know they are suffering, we can see it in their eyes  
But if we asked ourselves if we care,  
Could we answer without lies?

—Doug Roche, 17, Michigan. Doug was inspired by "A Long  
Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier" authored by Ismael Beah.

*Art by Isabella Ronchetti, see p. 2* **Go Ahead, Break the Glass:** Ballpoint-pen and colored-pencil. I used a "stained-glass" technique because I wanted to depict the fragility both of freedom and of imprisonment. The barrier between the two realities is breakable, like glass, and sometimes unclear, causing the two realities to intermingle.

**Daughter of Fallen Stars:** The idea for this Indian-ink and colored-pencil drawing originated from a daydream I had earlier this year. I imagined a child born from the craters that shooting stars would make when they fall upon the earth, and who would be raised amongst the light and debris. After some experimenting, I came up with this image that I believe evokes the otherworldly, yet peaceful nature of such a girl.

**Corrida de toros:** I used Indian ink and colored pencils to represent the traditional Spanish bullfight, *corrida de toros*. I chose to portray only one mannequin controlled by strings to show that the bullfights are unethical and one-sided, as only the *torero* is really conscious of what is going on. The bull, on the other hand, is being controlled against its will and forced to fight, usually dying in the end.

**Chasing Its Own Tail:** Graphite and colored pencil. At first, this drawing was more of a formal practice, as I have been experimenting with half-portraits lately. Then, I began to think of how often we get stuck in cultural behaviors, including our habits with regard to the environment.

—Isabella Ronchetti, 13, Italian American, Virginia.

# *A Kaleidoscope of Languages*

**Saturday, 7 AM.**

“빨리 일어나라. 또 늦겠다. 얼른!” 엄마는 매주 토요일 말씀하셨다.

“Wake up. We’re going to be late again. Now!” said my mom every Saturday.

My mom opens the blinds and sunlight immediately floods my room, pricking at my crusted eyelids.

For years since kindergarten, my parents enrolled me in Korean school to preserve my Korean language abilities. Of course, as the I-know-everything-at-the-age-of-six child I was back then, I absolutely loathed every Saturday. While my friends slept in and watched Saturday cartoons, eating cereal in front of the TV, I unwillingly had to attend a sixth school day. Essentially, my weekends were only one day long for most of my childhood. In a six-year-old’s world, that was a controversial anomaly. On Fridays, when I mentioned that I had school the next day, I always received queer, puzzled looks from my elementary comrades, who also thought they knew the best for themselves. Who goes to school on Saturday? That’s nonsense—school is always only five days.

Obviously, in the long run, I’m here to say that it paid off tremendously, benefitting me more than I had predicted all along. But this isn’t one of those cliché essays that gushes about how some childhood misery became a learning experience. Instead, I also address the downsides and costs of my mother tongue.

My parents immigrated well into their adulthood at a point when agility in language naturally stiffens. As you can imagine, their English isn’t immaculate, dropping tenses here and there and using Konglish (term coined for English mixed with blatant native Korean accents). At home, I mainly communicate in Korean, inserting English sporadically. But my bilingual system gives me plenty of practice on a daily basis by putting my skills to trial in many situations.

I am my mother’s translator, interpreter, emergency dictionary and the like. Ever since middle school—which is when my mother deemed me mature enough for this—I have written countless letters, emails, and cards while she dictates the Korean version or passes me a paper full of characters.

Furthermore, I have taken countless phone calls for her (including those regarding adult matters like finance, which I barely comprehend and only speak as I am told). As I hold the phone to one ear, trying to listen, my mother speaks Korean rapidly, demanding me to explain her point precisely, clogging up my other ear. Simultaneously, my brain’s left hemisphere cranks its gears up to spit back a translation for both sides of the dialogue. At grocery stores looking for an item, asking for directions, medical appointments—each situation turns into a battlefield, as the machine gun inside my head exhausts ammunition.

Frankly though, these are trivial compared to my parents’—especially my mother’s—stress with foreign life. The U.S. will always remain a foreign country to them, despite their having obtained U.S. citizenship several years ago. During those awkward silences in conversations with others, I recognize the embarrassing, shameful discomfort on her face as she searches for the right words and grammar. I would feel exactly the same—stammering and silent. So for the parental sacrifices she makes, I orate for her with gratitude.

By providing me with the tools that Korean school taught me, I realize that perhaps my parents wanted to shield me from this feeling when I travel to Korea. Most Korean adults are surprised that a US-born who has never lived in Korea can speak and understand conversations so well. (It’s also a fantastic way to eavesdrop on conversations.) This is because most young Koreans—my peers here—can only communicate in English with their parents. Their knowledge of Korean is limited to greetings, and even those pronunciations are broken. Unfortunately, generations are rapidly losing the Korean language, widening the generational gap.

Every culture has its inherent advantages and disadvantages. I certainly believe that’s what makes the world so diverse with unique cultures. Otherwise, cultures would be “perfect” and uniform. I also believe we should admit those hidden downsides, especially to improve.

And I certainly learned a lot about Korean’s linguistic impact.

When I recently read “Outliers” by Malcolm

Gladwell, I found myself nodding vigorously and exclaiming, Yes! Finally, someone understands me! In part two, Gladwell explains how Korean communication ultimately caused a Korean Air flight's fatal disaster. Part of the issue is the enormous Power-Distance Index, which measures the degree of respect that exists between hierarchal levels. Speaking Korean requires different levels of addressing people, whether they're younger or older. I'm expected to use a formalized vocabulary and tone with adults and elders, and I approach them with less directness. Most of what a superior figure says is final in any situation. For the Korean Air pilots, it was a conflict about Korean language standards in the workplace. The secondary pilot had mitigated his speech until the true urgency and meaning of the flight's jeopardizing situation disappeared—all due to linguistic culture.

Likewise, I can relate when I converse with my parents, because if they don't understand, it often results from ambiguity, and it can be frustrating. I struggle to juggle back and forth between high-PDI Korean culture and lower-PDI Western culture, which has neither the strict levels nor dangers of obscurity. The contrast is stark, for my school peers speak to teachers with more relaxed and less distanced tones. For me, it would feel uncomfortable or rude. Yet I wish I could more light-heartedly interact with teachers and other adults, rather than focus on adjusting my tone and body language to reflect deference.

In spite of this, Korean is still a beautiful language—an integral aspect of myself. I'm thankful for the early and continuous exposure to Korean. Being bilingual itself is rewarding; it's the harmonious fusion of a two-cultured life in a highly-globalized period. Each string of my colorfully stranded culture is pulled in a different direction. But rather than dedicating individual parts of my heritage to separate environments, I plan to master an approach that feeds two birds with one hand.

—Elaine Park, 16, Korean American, Washington. Her family has moved around many times: Singapore for three years and in each of America's four time zones. She wants to know other international kids and their perspectives.



## *Bitter and Cold*

The constant rush of water: bold color of sapphire,  
ever-so elegant, swaying with afternoon breeze  
and I, one toe in and—  
quickly out!

the distinct sting of harsh, cold water  
*Much too painful for me.*

rough feet of my grandma  
stay completely immersed  
through all trials and tribulations of life  
*The cold is blunt to her now.*

but my story is just beginning  
as I scribble a new chapter

Brilliant sun smears delicate sky with vibrant hues  
of passionate pinks and vibrant peaches:  
her glimmering smile lights up  
the darkening atmosphere

Waves rock uncontrollably  
enough to make me snuggle  
in the comfort of her arms

*The world is new to me.*  
even intimidating at moments.  
How will I leave her arms  
to fend for myself?

Just live one moment at a time  
cherish every second  
every single breath  
and maybe—just maybe—  
it will not be so bitter  
after all.

—Karishma Muthukumar, Indian American, 15, California.

## **Bridge: Volume 1**

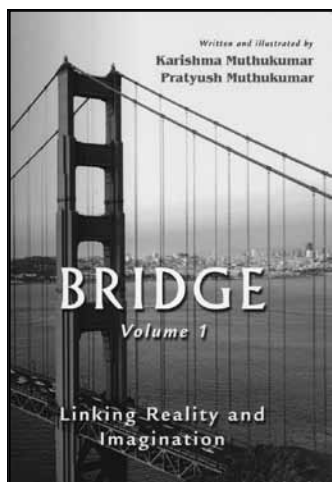
“I am the coauthor of this book and I believe that it is very unique in the sense that it combines science and poetry. While the poems help to bring out the emotions of the reader, the science portions ensure that the reader feels satisfied with knowledge. Additionally, there are hand-made illustrations using various mediums, including pastel, ink, colored pencil, and paint. In other words, this book is not only educational but also enjoyable.”

*See the next page for an excerpt.*





# The Light



## Poetry Meets Science

Imagine sunlight meeting raindrops at the sky. In that magical moment poetry begins to merge with science. While the scientists within us ponders over how the rainbow formed, the poet revels at what just happened. Despite these different points of view, the experience is unique and mesmerizing, especially when they meet.

Bridge is designed to inspire and allow anyone to explore this beautiful world around and reach for the world beyond by moving back and forth between reality and imagination.

—Excerpted from  
**Bridge: Volume 1** by  
Karishma Muthukumar,  
age 13, and Pratyush  
Muthukumar, age 10,  
California.

Born as an infant, red and in tears, I knew not of what was in store—  
The innocent light that shone in my eyes, would later be dimmed by war  
Then, as a toddler, chubby and gay, I laughed at the sight of my feet  
Strangers smiled and Grandma beamed, I was perfect, in their eyes, at least

By September I headed off into the wind, hand in hand with my best friend  
We giggled and skipped and groaned together, when we were picked last, again!  
By junior high, I averted my eyes, when movies were shown, now and then  
About wars and slaves and protests and raids, that's when the teasing began

It seemed no one saw me the way that I did, or maybe they didn't want to look  
From jeering and yelling, pushing me down, and grabbing my backpack and books  
I didn't want to be bullied because of my race, I needed to fit in with my peers  
I spent many hours alone in my room, staring at myself in the mirror

What are my choices, then? I ask. I refuse to be less than extraordinary.  
I want to stand in the sun, let the light in my eyes. No, stop, they say. You're ordinary.  
I don't see people like me on TV, maybe that's part of the fight  
From movies to television to everything else, Hollywood seems so white

Now, at the ripe old age of sixteen, I've seen too much to go back  
We're no longer the innocent children, jumping over the sidewalk cracks  
Indeed, a battle call this is, for those who are suppressed or unheard  
Stand up, show up, give up the idea of that life you once thought you deserved

I know there are others who feel the same way, they're just afraid to speak up  
Thinking does nothing, action does something. Chin up, buttercup!  
That sweet, smiling baby that sang in her sleep, is someone complex, someone more  
That innocent light that shone in my eyes? It still exists in my core.

—Lindsey Mutz, 16, Michigan. *"My poem reveals the experiences and thoughts of a girl as she goes through life continually suffering mistreatment because of her race. The ending of the poem reflects the empowerment and action I hope to inspire among all not treated equally. I hear racist/sexist comments pretty often, at school and in other public places. And with the global movements and outrage against incidents such as the Trayvon Martin shooting, I thought this was an important issue to bring to light. I have a strong passion for the arts and enjoy writing poetry, fiction, and screenplays."*



### The Gray City... continued from page 28:

...cricket chirps while reading *Harry Potter*, far far away from the clamors of the city.

Value seems to only ever come with an absence.

If there's ever a nice day outside in your area, go outside. Leave your phone behind. Take a step outside and fixate on each and every one of your senses. Feel the breeze between your fingers, the warm sun on your skin, the sweet air flooding your lungs—before it's too late.

—Jaye Ahn, 17, South Korea.

## *Just Following Orders: My Day at the Khmer Rouge War Crimes Tribunal*

I sit in the press gallery. It's one thing to read about human atrocities, it's different to be twenty feet away as perpetrator and victim go face to face. I came to the tribunal well-read on Cambodia's homegrown genocide during 1975–1979 that claimed two million lives. I came as a granddaughter of a survivor of a different genocide, one looking for comparisons. Nothing prepared me to see the face and hear the words of pure evil under the sleek new courtroom's bright lights.

Reuters to my right, Bloomberg to my left, their laptops at the ready with voice recognition software, I flipped my headset to English. Nobody seemed to notice they were sitting next to a thirteen-year-old. There were more important matters at hand. Me, I did not feel out of place. The eighty-nine-year-old defendant makes a conspicuous entrance, like he's offended by the denigration and at the same time pleased to return to the spotlight. His wheelchair rolls past the victims' table as if their roles are reversed. No one can look into his eyes. He wears the dark glasses of cataract patient, or a man who'd flinch from the bright light of justice. This is Nuon Chea. This is the infamous Brother No. 2, second in command to Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot. I once shook hands with Tom Cruise and still remember the exhilarating feeling of celebrity. Here was another celebrity. I can't describe the feeling. But it was awesome. Not in a good way.

Nuon Chea wasn't just Pol Pot's right hand man. Some believe he was the real brain behind the operation. This Paris-educated man justified the creation of an "agrarian Maoist utopia" in eliminating all traces of intellectual and cultural life. Nuon Chea was convicted for Crimes Against Humanity in August 2014, and given a life sentence. The trial I attended is a second one for separate genocide charges.

The man speaks, soft and croaking. The sounds may be halting. Yet, his excuses flow steadily. The defense attorney encourages him, in French, with softballs. Nuon Chea's words come in a rehearsed chain forty years old. He hides behind his high status as chief ideologue of the Communist Party, and its prime minister in 1976. He was a head of state, after all, not some low level official the world can drag before it for interrogation. The man seems to crave respect, perhaps even fear, of a bygone era. That presents a change in trial strategy. At one time, the Khmer Rouge' defense relied

on the difficulty proving who formed the "Angkor," its secretive leadership. Now, Chea says he was too high-level to have involvement in genocide; he was a policy man, not an executioner. He was stuck with humdrum duties of government in Phnom Penh. If he had any failing, he says with a smile of self-deprecation, it was that he didn't travel to the countryside. He would've been "shocked, just shocked," if he saw the Killing Fields. He only admits a failure of supervision, of "incorrect hiring of cadres." He is a liberator, a revolutionary, a Robin Hood, not a mass murderer. He expresses a "moral remorse" but no fault.

This trial, part of the long and delayed United Nations-sponsored Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), receives plenty of criticism. Various defendants have died or reached the last days of their lives without facing trial. It is also praised as a public forum for survivors to set the historical records straight. But claims of government interference behind the delays stoke suspicions that forces to cover up the past are still powerful and national reconciliation is regarded as more important than actual justice. And a young generation, in a country where even survivors hesitate to speak, wants to "move on." It is said that the ECCC tribunal is a modern Asian version of the Nuremberg Trials (of Nazi criminals shortly after WWII), an event which also yielded surprisingly few convictions. But, sitting in the press gallery of the ECCC looking at Brother No. 2, I was reminded of another trial, that of the Nazi Adolf Eichmann after his capture by Israel's Mossad in 1960.

"I was just following orders." Where had I heard this before? I knew the answer. My grandfather escaped from Nazi Austria in 1940. His family received an American visa the same month they received German papers ordering them to Mauthausen. The Jewish Holocaust has been imprinted in my DNA. My grandfather taught me a strange-sounding phrase when I was a kid, "the banality of evil." Those aren't his words. It's the famous saying coined by the political philosopher Hannah Arendt when she covered the Eichmann trial. She was struck how the architect of Hitler's Final Solution stood there and talked of being a cog in a bigger wheel and how this absolved him of direct responsibility in the murder of six million. She was struck by his physical presence; how a man who was the embodi-

## Noteworthy YHA Entries

### *Racial Profiling*

Racial profiling is the use of an individual's race or ethnicity as a factor in deciding whether to engage in enforcement (e.g. stop and search or arrest). The practice is controversial and illegal in many jurisdictions. It should not be confused with offender profiling which is an investigative tool. I think racial profiling is horrible, because the police judge black people by their skin color. Some police officers think they are better than black people.

Did you know that racial profiling doesn't only happen to black people? It also happens to other minorities like Latinos. According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice, statistics show that African American males born in 2001 have a 32% chance of going to jail in their lifetime, while a Latino male has a 17% chance, and a White male has only a 6% chance. This suggests that racial profiling is used to unjustly jail minorities.

I believe that something needs to be done about racial profiling. I would like to work with minority activists to protest against police brutality and racial profiling. I would also like to include my fellow schoolmates in the marches against profiling, because we are all the country's future. In order to make changes, we should make signs stating, "No Racial Profiling." We as children should learn how to respect police officers and police officers should learn how to respect all people regardless of their skin color. We need to learn ways to protect ourselves from this type of injustice and inequality.

—Khysimmiyah Yisrael, grade 6, African-American, NY.

### *Sunset*

The night seeps into the sky above  
Like a droplet of black ink into the ocean  
Every last drop of color  
Exits the sky  
Darkness corrupts  
But during its last few moments  
Something beautiful

—Quinn Callaghan, 12, California.

ment of evil could, stripped of his SS uniform, look so ordinary. Like the Nuon Chea I see today. Eichmann's real defense, said Arendt, was that "he not only obeyed orders, he also obeyed the law."

This justification seems dangerous. A Hitler, or a Pol Pot, can make the law of a country. But a person carrying out this kind of law breaks the law of civilization. People know evil from good and must be responsible for their actions. Otherwise, we've lost our humanity. Some have said "there is a potential Eichmann in all of us." I pondered this as I stared at the eighty-nine-year-old. Does evil exist in even the most ordinary people; would we all be "willing executioners" if ordered to do so? I cannot bring myself to agree. We are animals. But we are not sheep. We are human. Without responsibility, without the ability to disobey the order to murder, we are inhuman.

—Nicole Weinrauch, 13, Singapore.



### *The Last Candle*

In the Menorah,  
The last flame  
The last light  
Goes out.  
  
Smoke follows the dead red flame  
Burning only on wick,  
Mourning.  
  
Grey-white smoke swirls in the air,  
Weaving pictures  
Long forgotten  
Stories  
Once told.  
  
Fly from orange flame,  
Weaving dragons  
And lost souls  
They dance from the flame a grey thread  
And into my heart.  
  
The last flame  
Standing alone  
Found a way  
To live forever.

—Sylvie Florence Liss, 10, New York.

Seoul is a tiny, colorless city, compacted into a tiny country filled with millions of tiny people, each with their tiny metal cars and tiny cement apartment homes.

Lights from the concrete jungles replace the sparkle of the stars; trailing puffs of smoke replace the clouds; and chatters of city dwellers silence the birds.

It's a city without a sky. Mornings tend to be gray, and the nights are a purple shade stained from a toxic concoction of excessive chemical and light pollution.

Looking up at the sky is staring at the light gray walls of hospital halls or at the ceiling of office buildings. It's like the sun is covered behind a giant A4 sheet of paper, and a small poke through the paper would release floods of sunlight and blue sky.

It's a challenge to take a deep breath without getting a tiny taste of the polluted air or yellow dust in the

back your mouth. During spring or fall break, families rush to the countryside to get their annual serving of fresh air, driving through endless highways for endless hours, away from the city. But really, beyond Seoul city, Korea can be a beautiful place. The mountains have soft contours as if drawn with a single brushstroke. Petals of cherry blossoms blow like a pink snowfall on in the spring, and red, orange, yellow leaves paint the wind in the fall.

Living in Korea has been a privilege in its own way. Looking back, too many days have ticked by, taken for granted. I never really appreciated those moments when I would slip out of my sandals and step barefooted in lush fields of grass, or sit underneath the speckled shade of a large oak tree with a friend. I think back to the days when I would take walks by the river during hot summer evenings with my mom, or when I would sit on the porch and listen to soft... *Continued on p. 25*

## *I Am An Artist*

I am musical and smart,  
I am an admirer of the arts  
I am a true heart  
That I've been from the start  
I am an instrument in the orchestra of life,  
And I make beautiful music  
The difference is,  
I intend to use it  
I am a music note,  
In the song of trust  
And I resonate in the hearts,  
of the people I love  
I am a piano key,  
I ring out notes of glee,  
And I ring out in the souls,  
of everyone I see  
I am different and unique,  
I am just what I want to be  
I am an artist,  
And my art is where my heart is.

—Zian Mizan, grade 9, California. "I have a strong passion for music and my career goal for the future is to be a professional musical artist. The poem reflects on what it means to be an artist for me, not just in music, but in life as well."



## *I Am The Guanaco*

I am the humble guanaco—  
Silent on the sharp heights of the Andes,  
Raised from the grasses like a rustic peasant hut.  
I am the solitary guanaco—  
Alone amidst shrubs that camouflage adobe fur,  
Mournful as pan flute music haunting the thin air.  
I am the aloof guanaco.  
Shunning the safety of domesticated life,  
Shying from the comforts of cared-for creatures.  
I am the wild guanaco—  
Unpenned by herder's fence, untamed by man's demands,  
Unruly as winter wind whirling snow on the plateau.  
I am the rugged guanaco—  
Scrappy like a queñua bush clutching the altiplano,  
Scruffy like Esau in a matted reddish coat.  
I am the strong guanaco—  
Warring like the Inca against stony mountain harshness,  
Claiming a proud place where few will dare to climb.  
I am the swift guanaco—  
Racing fast and fleet across the lofty plain,  
Leaping with the "fine legs" Darwin once admired.  
I am the free guanaco—  
In isolation I find the contentment of solitude,  
In difficulty I learn the joy of striving.  
—Natalie Gínez, 16, Ecuadoran American, New Jersey.

## *Korea: Land of the Morning Calm*

The Asian sun rises  
Waking everyone up  
Morning is coming.  
Beautiful views  
Of the crystal waters,  
Reflecting the first sunlight.  
The colorful sky opens  
Filled with bright colors,  
Breaking the darkness.  
The land stays calm,  
While daytime prepares.  
In this moment,  
Before work begins  
Before all the business,  
Morning is king in this land.  
It shows a peaceful people  
A true soul of the nation,  
Filled with love and quietness.  
The sun comes up,  
Showing Korea's true colors filled with  
Brightness, goodness, peace, and light.

—Julia Seo, 11, Colorado.

*We will publish  
many more  
noteworthy YHA  
entries in the  
next issue!*



## *Mother Nature*

*Inspired by Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata*

Why must she suffer after all she has done for us?  
We disrespect her by trying to control her.  
She has all the power, now don't forget.  
She gave us the life that we need to thrive.  
She is the entity that helps.  
SHE is in control.  
She tells us what to do, yet we never listen.  
Her heart cries as the wind howls.  
Her tears become the rain.  
The sacrifices she does for us.  
She needs us just as we need her so both of us can live on  
The beautiful music she makes within her.  
The wind soft, the rain cool.  
The things she does for us, just as if we are her children.  
She is OUR Mother Nature and there is only one.  
The more reasons we should protect her.  
Sacrifices are made and choices right.  
Mother Nature, the one and only, for all of those living.

—Sierra Charlie, 13, Native American, New Mexico.

## *Hanging off the Wall*

I am always given the last shot  
It seems like it takes a billion years  
Until someone realizes I exist  
To them I'm extinct  
Am I that ugly?  
Please, someone? Anybody?  
I need to know  
I don't want to be remembered as if I were a beast!

Maybe if I didn't act weird, they'll like me  
Maybe I'm not interesting  
Who knows? I want to know.  
Am I just a talking door hanging off the wall?  
Is that why people hit me and swing me around?  
Maybe that's why they tell  
me to shut up!  
I need help, I need healing

My owl eyes scare them...  
Is that the reason?  
I have to change, get my revenge!

—Jeira Acevedo, grade 8, Puerto Rican, Virginia. She adds:  
"My poem paints a picture about bullying using a door... If  
somebody is getting bullied, they face it everyday. And every-  
day the door faces people who kick it, slam it, and punch it."

## *Mother Nature*

The picture came out.  
Polaroid camera.  
The face smiled brightly at the lens.  
Her face.  
Warm and full of hope.  
With her every word.  
Trees danced.  
When she was in a good mood.  
Birds chirped.  
Where can she be found exactly?  
As she smiled.  
Flowers bloomed.  
As trash littered her home.  
She weakened.  
Youth no longer on her side.  
She wanted to be young forever.  
Evergreen tree.

—Abigail Calinog, 17, Filipina American, Illinois.



## ✧ *The Last Glimpse of Happiness* ✧

It was a beautiful, sunny day on the Lost Coast of California. I began to blink my eyes from my sleep, and was blinded by the bright sun rays coming in to my hotel room. I could smell the homemade quiche from the coffee shop next door. As I tiptoed down the cold hardwood floor, I watched the beautiful, blue Pacific crashing over the boulders, and the black sand of the beach.

Mom came over and told me to drink my herbal tea before it got too cold. After I got dressed, I decided to eat and take some of my summer reading onto the inviting balcony. The panoramic view was better than any postcard I had ever seen. In front of me were the large boulders that made the water crash along the shore. Beside me was the black sand, where tiny rocks were being pushed around due to the rip tides. How they built a hotel on a cliff is a mystery to me.

A harsh noise came out of nowhere as the rain drizzled down. I frowned as soon as I saw one tiny drop of water, although I thought it was beautiful. The rain drizzled like tear drops from heaven. When the rain stopped, I spotted something in the horizon. At first, I thought it was a ship like the ones you see in movies, or the ones you can imagine in your mind from stories.

But then, I saw a different splash coming from another direction, and knew it was alive. I saw a whale's tail! "Wow!" I exclaimed, "Mom, come see the whales!" She turned her head, and she knew exactly what I was looking at. This was the reason we had made the trip.

It took about fifteen minutes until we got a full glimpse of the whales' color. The white and black glimmered in the sunlight. "Look Mom, there's a smaller one and a bigger one. They must be a family," I continued.

"It must be, Glenn. They are probably looking for food or warmer water. They seem to be headed south," she replied. At that very minute, nothing else mattered but those whales and their story. Why were they so close to shore and did they know we were watching them?

I heard the large bang again, and I knew the storm was back. I wondered if the whales were afraid, being controlled by the currents, the loud thunder, and the hard rain.

"Glenn, come inside before you get drenched," Mom ordered. Her words broke my connection with the whales.

"Alright," I said with disappointment. I stepped inside on the cold hardwood floor, and looked back and saw an enormous white and black tail waving goodbye to me.

I stood in silence wondering what made me feel so blessed. Seeing these whales on this late August day, reminded me of all the welcomes and goodbyes I had made over the summer. This will always be a really special summer that I'll remember, and these giant creatures made me realize it. The experience helped me know that days don't end in disappointment or emptiness. Each day is a new journey, each welcome is a new chance for happiness, and each goodbye is part of life. But most importantly, what comes next for me is just over the horizon.

—Glenna Gobeil, grade 8, Pennsylvania.

### *By Streams that Never Find the Sea*

In mountains I was born  
In cold where nothing stays  
The trees, the rocks, and snow  
I miss them whilst away  
By forests winding hills  
Mine is a journey long  
There's but one place to go  
With winds who urge me on  
I've heard the dancing grass  
I've talked with mountains tall  
I've reached beyond the clouds  
My gaze upon my fall  
Whose feet carry their words  
Whose hands guide all their dreams  
I've passed through dust and years  
I've birthed so many streams  
There's but one place to go  
I wonder if I'm free  
Though I've seen the land and sky  
I've yet to find the sea

—Ethan Liu, 15, Chinese American, Maryland.

Ethan adds: "I realized that the river did not have to find the sea to make its journey worthwhile..." (YHA entry)

# Nana Jean on Creativity

What opens the door for passions and interests? Does environment or opportunity matter? And how are those related to talents?

I remember a teacher telling my mother that I had completed an art project extremely well. Eventually I majored in art. Now, I consider myself an artist and work to introduce my grandchildren to art and design.

Most of my own work is landscapes. Trees, clouds, mountains. I have painted in the Cayman Islands, Mexico and Hawaii. The ocean looks the same.

If I were painting people and villages and images from around the world, the cultures would be evident as they are in many images in *Skipping Stones*. Perhaps one day I will. I expect my trips to Greece and Egypt will include simple landscapes that connect us across the globe.

A recent Cousins Camp theme on plants seemed like a foundation for artwork for my grandchildren. I invited my own art mentor, Paul Toews (see photo below) to teach my four grandkids—Bella, Jamie, Chance and Ainsley—how to draw trees. I gave each brushes, paints and paper. During two sessions the children first drew an evergreen tree and then painted a deciduous tree.

Some of the artwork remained in boxes, while Bella's parents framed and hung them on a wall not far from one of my own works. (*Evergreen Tree*, col. 2, drawn by Ainsley, age 10 at the time).



Bella sees herself as an artist. While she is growing into her own passions in many ways, artwork continues as an interest. Recently, we worked together to paint miniature pieces of clouds and mountains. As I suggested we move to another subject she stated that she wanted to “do an abstract.” Layers of paint and color later she signed the work and gave it to me as a gift.

Ainsley has a talent in design and puts together outfits for herself and Bella. She can turn a trip to a used clothing store into a fashion show.

The grandchildren have designed and floated boats, put together costumes for the Cousins Camp and painted huge backdrops for their programs. The simplest of materials, a bit of glue, and freedom to make a mess, and they are off. Summers work because the mess stays outside. Dirty children? We can hose them off.

Some projects are fun in the making and have no purpose but play. Others are photographed and sent to parents. And some are hung with pride.

~Jean Moule, artist, [www.jeanmoule.com/creativity](http://www.jeanmoule.com/creativity), Oregon.





**The Peace Tree from Hiroshima:** *The Little Bonsai with a Big Story* by Sandra Moore, illustr. Kazumi Wilds (Tuttle). The tradition of bonsai keeping is often one that spans generation in Japan. Powerful illustrations pull readers into the humbling tale of how one bonsai tree became an important symbol of peace for America and Japan. Ages 5-9. ISBN 978-4-8053-1347-3

**Always Mom, Forever Dad** by Joanna Rowland, illustr. Penny Weber (Tilbury House). These days, more and more children have parents who live separately. In this reassuring book, the young reader feels secure with the knowledge that even when the going is difficult, Mom and Dad will always love them. Ages 5-9. ISBN 978-0-88448-367-0.

**Boy Zorro and the Bully/El Niño Zorro y el Peleón** by/por Kat Aragon, illustr. Noël Ill (Lectura Books). Benny is always ready to help others. One morning, at school, he makes a difference by helping stop a bully from intimidating another students. This bilingual book teaches children that bullying is hurtful and wrong but when we all do our part, it can be stopped. Ages 7-10. ISBN 978-1-60448-026-9.

**How to Tell a Story** by Daniel Nayeri (Workman). With colorful illustrations and easy to understand description of the basic story elements, this book is full of great tips for writers of any level. With a fun, personal approach of talking to the reader and 20 blocks, you'll surely enjoy this helpful guide on how to tell a story. Ages 10 and up. ISBN 978-0-7611-8457-7

**Snowspirit:** *The Virgo Key* by Rainye Day (Futurecultures). Elia may be a young girl, but when she is enlisted by a Snowspirit to bring back the Virgo Key—the key necessary to free the twelve trapped Horoscopian Gods—her responsibilities far exceed age. Join her as she undergoes perilous adventures that will not only build towards defeating the all-powerful demon god, but will determine the fate of the universe. Ages 10-13. ISBN 978-0-9907644-9-6

**Under the Mesquite** by Guadalupe Garcia McCall (Lee & Low). When Lupita, the eldest daughter finds out that her mom has cancer, she is terrified of losing her Mami. A touching novel in an evocative free verse, *Under the Mesquite* is an empowering story about testing of family bonds and the strength of a teenage Mexican girl. Ages 12-17. ISBN: 978-1-60060-429-4.

**Wild Ideas:** *Let Nature Inspire Your Thinking* by Elin Kelsey, illustr. Soyeon Kim (Owl Kids). An artistic and awe-inspiring look at what animals can teach us about problem solving. Ages 4-8. ISBN 978-1-77147-062-9

**Poems in the Attic** by Nikki Grimes, illustr. Elizabeth Zunon (Lee & Low). A young girl discovers her mom's poems from her childhood. Daughter of a Air Force captain, her mom's poetry shared the joys and struggles that come with moving from place to place. Ages 5-9. ISBN 978-1-62014-027-7

**Here I am** by Patti Kim, illustr. Sonia Sánchez (Capstone Young Readers). Experience a young boy's journey to a new life in a new country, a new world full of possibility, and a new future of hope in this exquisitely illustrated book full of over hundred images. Ages 5-10. ISBN 978-1-62370-036-2

**Do You Know Tigers?** by Alain M. Bergeron, Michel Quintin, and Sampar, illustr. Sampar (Fitzhenry). This book presents facts about tigers alongside entertaining art that adds comedy to learning about tigers. Comic book format. Ages 8-12. ISBN 978-1-55455-355-6

**Snowbound Secrets** by Virginia Kroll and Nívola Uyá (Cuento de Luz). Set in the Himalayan country of Bhutan, this story of a little girl's encounter with a Yeti, the big-footed creature. She is able to rejoin her family with his help. Ages 8-11. ISBN 978-84-15784-72-2

**The Stone Lions** by Gwen Dandridge (Hickory Tree). Ara, the daughter of a sultan in 14th century Islamic Spain, goes on an adventure filled with math and magic. With the help of a Sufi mathemagician, Ara must find seven broken symmetries and awaken stone lions as she tries to save her tutor, Suleiman, who has been turned into a snake. Ages 12-17. ISBN 978-0-9893157-8-4

**Surviving Santiago** by Lyn Miller-Lachmann (Running Press). Tina Aguilar, a 16 year old girl, is forced to visit her father in Santiago, Chile for the first time in years. Set in 1989, during the Pinochet regime in Chile, the story contains bilingual dialogue and a relatable main character. Ages 13-17. ISBN 978-0-7624-5633-8

**River Song** by Richard D. Scheuerman & Clifford E. Trafzer (W.S.U. Press). River Song is a compilation of art, poetry, traditions, maps, and history of the Naxiyamtáma (Snake River Palouse) Native American people. It offers an educational perspective on their distinct culture. Ages 14-adult. ISBN 978-0-87422-327-9

★ **Fossil Fuels are Killing Us... Quitting them Can Save Us.** Comparing coal, oil, and gas addiction, to the last generation's effort to kick the tobacco habit, doctors say that quitting dependence on fossil fuels would be the best thing humanity can do for its long-term health. "Responding to climate change could be the biggest global health opportunity of this century," says a comprehensive report in *The Lancet*, the UK-based medical journal, which explores the complex intersection between global human health and climate change. The report, "Health and climate change: *Policy responses to protect public health*," declares that the negative impacts of human-caused global warming have put at risk some of the world's most impressive health gains over the last 50 years. Continued use of fossil fuels is leading humanity to a future in which infectious disease patterns, air pollution, food insecurity and malnutrition, involuntary migration, and violent conflict will all be made worse. —*Common Dreams*.

★ Even though many world leaders recognize the problem, the recent G7 agreement to decarbonize our energy by 2100 AD is a horrifying joke. None of today's politicians making the commitment will be alive to bear the responsibility... and the time frame doesn't address the urgent need to begin huge reductions in fossil fuel use immediately. —*David Suzuki Foundation*.

★ In an historic June 2015 ruling, the Supreme Court of the United States affirmed that any couple, regardless of sexual orientation, can marry, and have their union recognized with the respect and dignity that the full force of the law allows. Same-sex couples may now exercise their fundamental right to marry in all 50 states. No longer may this liberty be denied to them.

★ After the brutal killing of nine black people by a white gunman in a South Carolina church, governor Nicky Haely asked the state legislature to vote to **remove the Confederate Flag**—a symbol of rebellion and racism since the Civil War—from the state capitol and move toward healing the society. Several other southern states will also follow her lead and remove the flag from their state buildings.

★ June 21, 2015 the **Summer Solstice** was also celebrated as the **International Yoga Day** in India, the U.S. and many countries. Over the centuries, the June solstice has inspired countless festivals, celebrations and religious holidays. In Sweden and neighboring coun-

tries, it is celebrated as the midsummer festival whereas in the Southern hemisphere, it is shortest (winter) day!

★ The Library of Congress has named **Juan Felipe Herrera** as the **U.S. Poet Laureate**. He is the first Latino poet to receive this honor. The Children's Book Press (now part of Lee & Low Books) published four of his books for children. *Skipping Stones* honored one of his bilingual books, *Grandma and Me at the Flea/Los Meros Meros Remateros*, in 2003.

★ NPR news reported on July 31 that many of the processed foods that we eat, and the way they're made, with plenty of salt, were invented not for us, but for soldiers, says the new book, *Combat-Ready Kitchen*.

★ Americans will breathe easier with less air pollution, have more job opportunities in the clean energy sector because of the EPA's 2015 Clean Power Plan that calls for 32% reduction from 2005 levels of carbon emissions by 2030. We'll use fewer sick days, have fewer asthma attacks, and prevent thousands of premature deaths.

★ Pope Francis, in his famous June 2015 encyclical, has called for a **swift action on climate and nature** protection before it is too late. He said our materialistic and wasteful society is hurting the planet and the poor.

**The Celebrate America Creative Writing Contest** invites creative entries from fifth graders in the United States. The 2016 theme is: **Why I Am Glad America Is a Nation of Immigrants**. Limit essay, poem, story, interview, etc. to 500 words. To enter the contest, please visit the American Immigration Council's page: <http://www.celebrateamericawritingcontest.org> or email your enquiry to: [teacher@immccouncil.org](mailto:teacher@immccouncil.org)

Volunteer attorneys from local AILA (American Immigration Lawyers Association) chapters visit teachers and give classroom presentations on immigration to inform students and teachers about the important role immigration plays in our society. The attorneys also explain contest details and invite students to participate.

In the winter and early spring, teachers can submit student entries to local AILA chapters who then select and honor a winner(s) on the local level. In April, local AILA chapters send winning entries to the Council to be judged by a panel of national celebrity judges. The national winners will be announced in May and also in *Skipping Stones*.



## Cultural Dance Competition in Namibia



Every year, the Ministry of Education of Namibia hosts a Cultural Dance Competition in Kavango, a region in northern Namibia. This competition is held on the banks of the beautiful Kavango River.

Students from all over the region board buses early in the morning for the daylong event. Spectators jockey for a good view. Some get better seats than others by climbing trees and getting a birds-eye view of the competition.

Students from lower and upper secondary schools are invited to participate. Each group incorporates their school colors into the costumes. The girls wore elaborate beadwork in their outfits and headdresses. Boys wear costumes made of bamboo, cool bottle tops, and occasionally a furry animal skin. Despite best efforts, western influences can still be seen. The girls wear all smiles, but the boys have their game faces on.



This event is serious competition between the schools. Along with the shimmying, shaking, and singing, there is some intense drumming. The contest is not just fun and games. Each school is required to perform a skit addressing social issues facing many young Namibians, such as teen pregnancy and alcohol abuse.

I spent two years as a teacher at Andara Combined School in Kavango Region of Namibia. I am proud to say that Andara C. S. walked away with top prizes in the Cultural Dance Competition.

As the sun began to set over the Kavango River, awards were announced. There were lots of winners and a few losers. But everyone was all smiles as they boarded their buses for the long ride home.

—Christina E. Mylonas has served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Namibia. She currently lives in Oshakati and works with the Oshana Regional Study and Resource Center. Photos by Christina E. Mylonas.





**Art by Students at Na'au, Hawai'i** Please see pages 16-17 for their creative writing pieces.



*Kapuna Song* by Aaron Kia'i Hanohana-Hashimoto, grade 4



*True Heart of the Manila Slums* by Rana S. Mejles, grade 8



*Elepai'o in the Night* by Jake Hamadon, grade 3



*I'iwi in the 'Ohia Lehua Tree* by Max Okazaki, age 6



*Grandma's Store* by Hannah Dela Cruz, grade 5



*Ko'u Ohana* by Keanuenue DeSoto, grade 6



www.SkippingStones.org

**Skipping Stones**

P. O. Box 3939

Eugene, Oregon 97403

facebook.com/SkippingStonesMagazine

Twitter: @SkpStns

☐ Please Subscribe/Renew



Talking Heads by Adam Shaw, 16, New York



Indian Festival of Diwali by Jiya Patel, 12, NJ.



Peony by Jo de Waal, 16, Connecticut



On Eymir Lake, Turkey by Vera Visser, 16, Netherlands



Ancient Tree, S. Korea by Jennifer Seo, 13, Colorado



Swan by Sophie Hess, 14, Wisconsin



Swan by Sophie Hess, 14, Wisconsin



Land of the Morning Calm by Julia Seo, 11, Colorado



Waterfowl by Sarah McVey, grade 6, Iowa