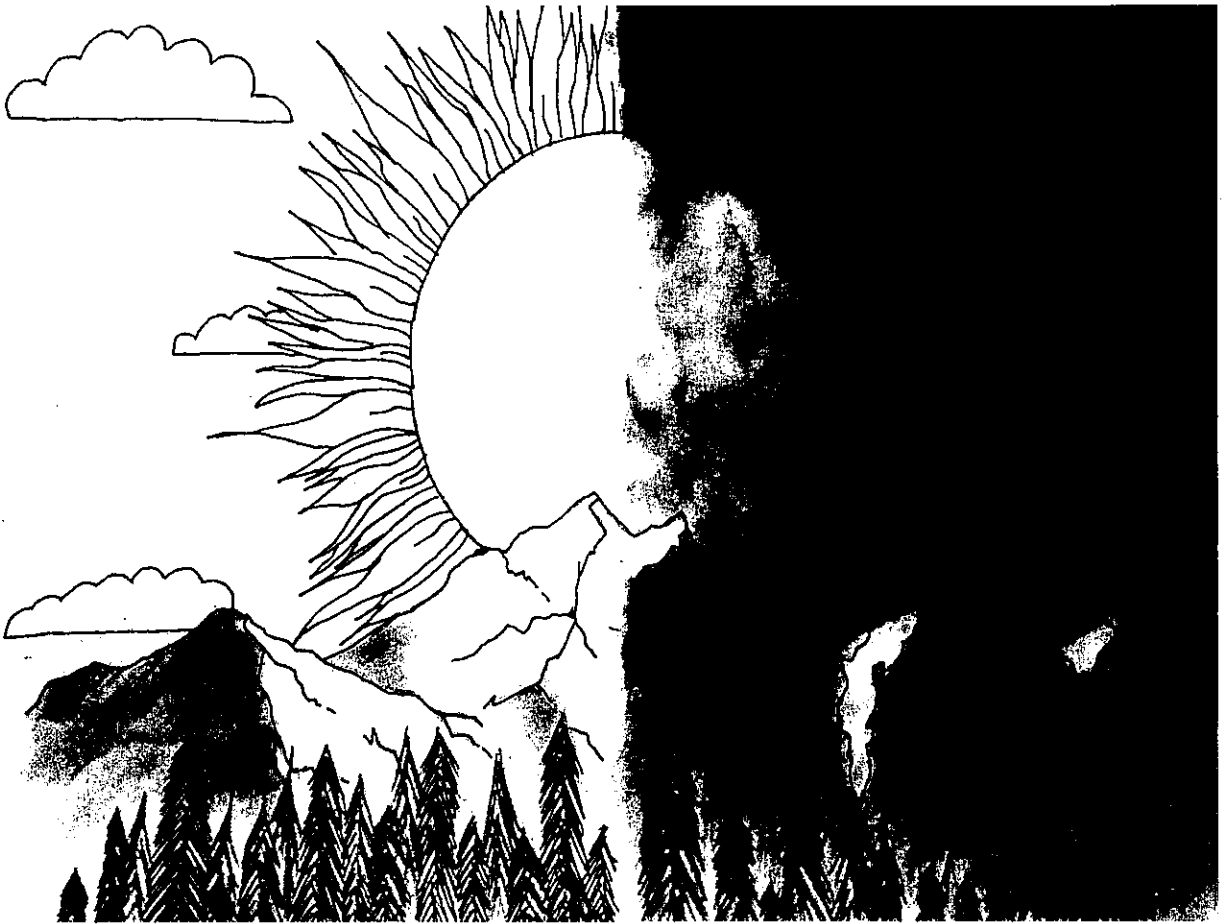


Pen and Parchment



Spring 2018

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Produced By:

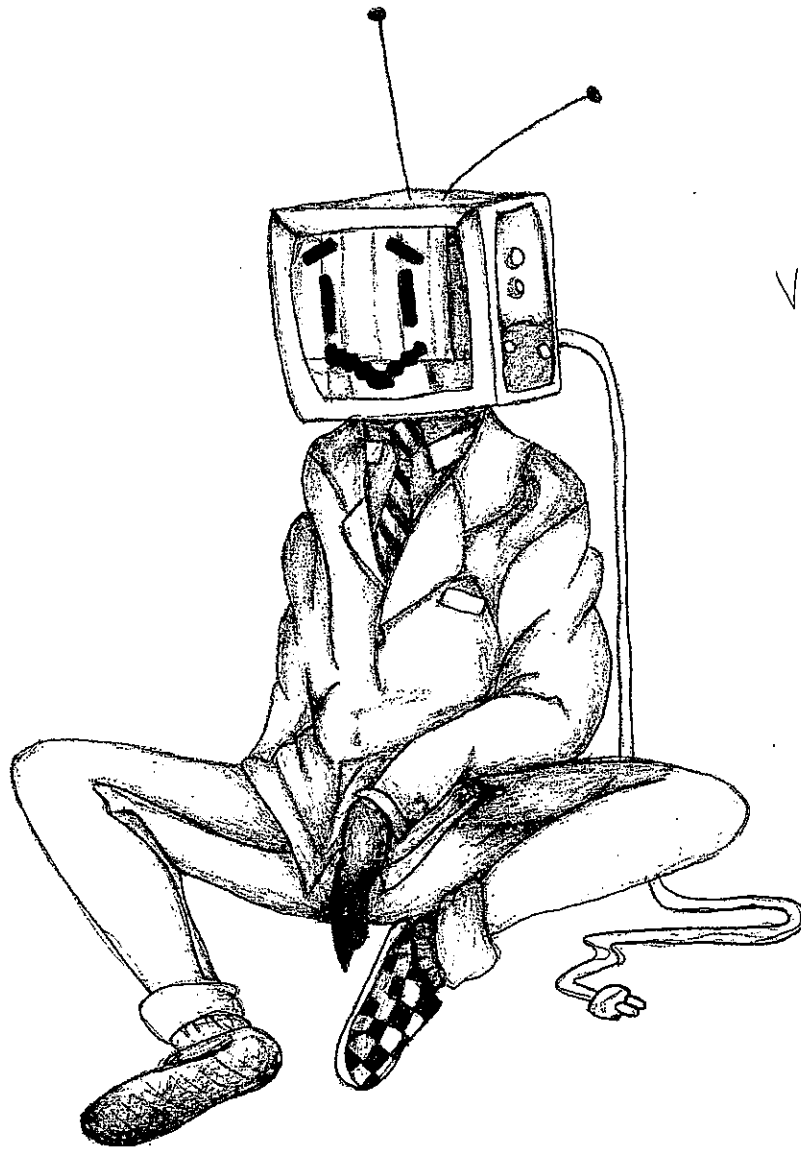
The NBIS Writing Lab Team

Cover Art: "In Between" by Dhruvi

Injustice
Paige and Sheyenne

There are times when we are powerless
Just standing still, watching the fire burn.
The silence encourages the tormentor,
Stealing the faith from the tormented.
But the snow will fall,
And we will not fail to protest.
Take a side,
Fix what has been broken.
The night will come,
And we will rise,
No longer the victims.

Untitled
Alyssa



Video Killed
the
Radio Star
1978

↓ 40 years
2018

April

Anonymous

Why in April is it still snowing
The cold wind is blowing
During the night
The snow gives me fright
The snow needs to keep going

Mexico

Amellia

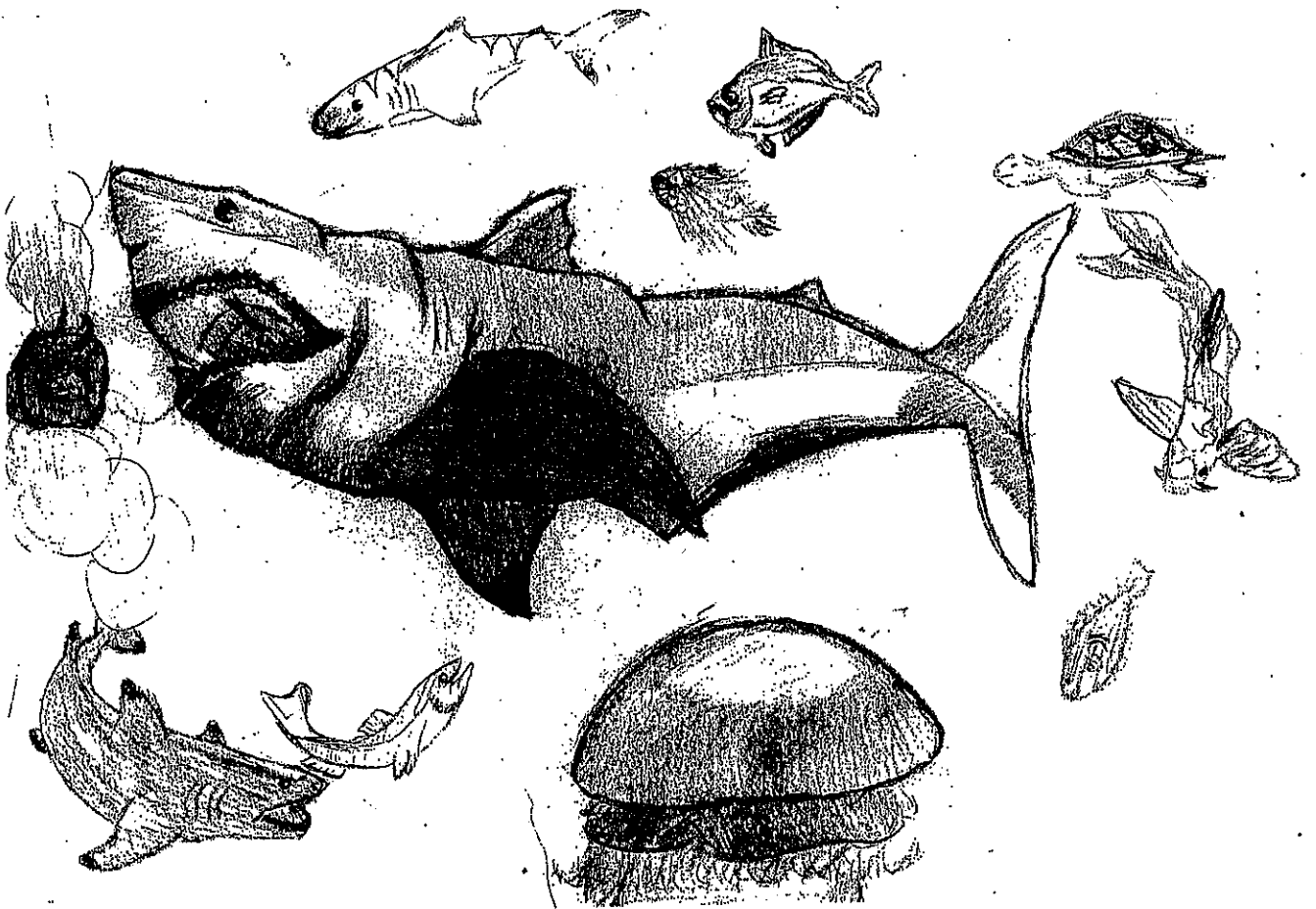
The sun hits my skin
The beach waves crash against rocks
Sunset fades to night

The Summer Limerick

Bianca

It is the start of summer
People say it's such a bummer
They say it's so hot
It's like living in a pot
When it ends it's such a bummer

Untitled
Evyn



Tree at Sunset

Taylor

The tree was bare black against the orange sky. Its branches grasped for the clouds, reaching spindly fingers towards the vibrant colors that cast a deep red glow on everything the light touched. The tree's roots dug deep into the soft earth, grasping the soil beneath it with strong hands. It was reaching up and digging deeper simultaneously, stretching until its rough and wrinkled bark could stand the reaching no longer. Still, the tree grew.

Rolling Towards Friendship

Alex

Why did no one interact with Jamie? He had never done anything wrong nor did he ever harm another person, yet for some reason nobody at his new school came to talk to him, until one day. Jamie was ten-years-old and lived in Johnston, Iowa. He had glowing hazel eyes, frizzy brown hair, and a small droopy mouth. He was also a kind-hearted boy who enjoyed watching the stars and reading books in his cozy bed. Just by hearing this, some people may think that Jamie is living the perfect childhood. However, this is not true because he was diagnosed with cerebral palsy at birth. Jamie's life has been very difficult so far because of his constant stuttering, learning disabilities, and that fact that he has to sit in a wheelchair every day. For his whole life, Jamie had only known kids that had his same condition or a similar one, but he had never met a child who is considered 'normal'. He was always skeptical about the outside world and believed that he would never fit in, due to his condition. Thankfully his parents had convinced Jamie that the world was full of possibilities and hope. On Jamie's first day of fifth grade, he was guided through the halls by Ms. Phalange who was his new math teacher. While she presented him all the classrooms, the children in the hallway just stared with looks of disgust, confusion, and sadness. Jamie slowly began to adapt to his new school, but everyday he thought to himself deciding whether today would be the day someone would talk to him. Weeks passed by and not a single kid came to greet Jamie unless they were forced to by the adults. However, this all changed during the fifth week of school.

At twelve o'clock, the lunch bell rang and all of the students rushed to fill in the seats of the cafeteria except for Jamie. He silently rolled himself through the mess of students watching them with confusion. Why does nobody want to talk to me? What am I doing to make people steer away from me, Jamie thought. He watched the rest of the children do many different things such as racing down the hall, banging on the locker doors, and even scaring each other from around the corner. Jamie noticed the putrid odor of buffalo sauce and the delightful scent of sugary churros. He wondered whether today was going to be like any other ordinary day or if it would be exciting. Then again, Jamie didn't know what an 'exciting' day was because he had never had one. He imagined rolling into the cafeteria and finding everyone cheering, "Jamie! Jamie! Jamie!" No, that would never happen, Jamie thought to himself. When he finally reached the lunch room, he saw that nobody was cheering or even waiting for him. Jamie wheeled to his same spot at the edge of the corner table with a droopy frown on his pale face. He sat at one of the bare tables where nobody ever sat. As he pulled out his dry turkey sandwich from his bright blue lunchbox, he watched the rest of the kids laugh and gossip with other people that they called their 'friends'. Jamie had always wanted one of these 'friends'

but he was too afraid to ask for one. He knew that the only way for someone to become his friend is if they came up to him. It was then where Jamie had met his first friend.

Arnold was also ten-years-old, but had spiky blonde hair and icy blue eyes. He enjoyed eating a lot of food and playing Minecraft on his Xbox. Similar to Jamie, Arnold did not have a very easy childhood either, because he was considered 'fat'. Even his parents did not like how their son looked and they wanted him to change. Luckily, Arnold was the type of kid who didn't care about what anyone thought or felt about him. Nothing bothered Arnold and he never worried about even having friends. For years, Arnold had been as known as the 'fat kid from Louisiana' but once again, he never cared. When Arnold first saw Jamie, he never planned on interacting with him because Arnold was not really a social guy. However, everyday as he watched Jamie sit all alone he questioned whether he should talk to him or not. On the fifth week of fifth grade, Arnold decided that today would be the day he would switch tables to sit with Jamie. This is how it all went.

Arnold quietly rose from his chair and took his lunch tray to the corner table where Jamie sat. Arnold sat down next to Jamie and observed him nibble on his tiny piece of swiss cheese. Jamie also watched as Arnold chowed down his greasy bacon cheeseburger. The awkward silence was killing both of the boys yet none of them had the courage to speak.

Eventually, the silence broke and Arnold exclaimed, "Hey Jamie." Jamie stared at him with puzzled expression but still stayed silent. "How do you like it here at Summit Middle School?" Arnold questioned. Silence again. Every kid in the lunchroom paused their conversations and stared at the two boys interact. It was a mix of snickering and sneering between loud bursts of laughter.

Finally, Jamie opened his mouth and whispered, "Hello."

"Great, now we have both said something, so how's your day, what's on your mind, I am going to keep asking questions until you answer," Arnold said nervously. Jamie slightly opened his mouth to say something but then he closed it again.

"I - I - will you be my - my friend?" Jamie stuttered. Arnold was stunned as if the school had suddenly blown to pieces. He had no idea how to respond because he had never experienced anything remotely similar to what was happening. Arnold couldn't just walk away because he would feel like a jerk and he would most likely lose his only chance of having a friend. Then he remembered that Jamie was still waiting for an answer.

"Sure, I'll be your friend." Jamie's heart skipped a beat and he finally realized that his life may not be lousy after all. Jamie was a very pessimistic kid, until he met Arnold. He used to believe that nothing in his life would go his way and he never understood that almost anything is possible. Once Arnold had said that he would be Jamie's friend, Jamie's optimistic self broke free for just a second. After the

extraordinary moment of Jamie thinking that he would no longer be alone ended, he was back to thinking on the negative sign. "But - but, how will all of your other friends react? What will they say when-when they figure out that you have been hanging out with me? I - I shouldn't be here, I - I am just making your life worse," Jamie sputtered.

"Don't worry about it, I don't have any friends," Arnold responded.

"Oh I - I would have never guessed." Jamie and Arnold glanced at the big glass clock hanging on the beige wall. It was twelve-twenty-nine, a minute before the lunch bell would ring.

"Well, this was fun," Arnold acknowledged.

"Yah, maybe - I'll see you around," responded Jamie. Beeeeeeep! Arnold rose from his seat and joined the crowd of students as they fled back to their classes. On the other hand, Jamie took a moment to realize what had just happened. He had just made his first friend. As Jamie rolled away from the lunch table and to the back of the line of students, he continued to think about the past thirty minutes of his life. Everyday would now be different, unpredictable, and Jamie would have no control over what happened next.

That day when his mother picked him up from school, Jamie explained to her all about what had happened at lunch. Jamie's mother was very excited and told her son that she knew something good was coming his way. For the rest of that day, Jamie was thinking about what was going to happen tomorrow. He thought about the good possibilities and the bad ones. He thought to himself, Are we going to be hanging out everyday together? Am I going to be able to go over his house? What are his parents going to think about me? Will they let us continue to talk to each other? When Jamie woke up the next day, he still had the same thoughts scattered throughout his brain, but he tried not to let them bother him. As his mother drove him into school, Jamie looked out of the window watching the bright buses dash through the flourishing trees. Jamie had always wanted to go on a bus like all of the other children, but none of them had wheelchair ramps. He imagined what it would be like traveling on a bus every morning and afternoon. He would feel the breeze through the open windows and feel the large bumps spread across the wide roads. Before he could even finish his thought, Jamie arrived at school. The next few hours were a blur for Jamie because all he could think about was seeing Arnold at lunch. Luckily, the lunch bell was just about to ring and Jamie couldn't take his eyes off the clock. Beeeeeeep! Jamie wheeled himself through the halls, this time at the front of the crowd with a large grin on his face. Once he reached the cafeteria, he returned to the empty corner table waiting for Arnold to join him. Soon enough, he saw Arnold shuffle towards him with a tray of pasta with marinara sauce in his hands.

"Hello," Jamie whispered. Jamie forgot how hard it was to talk to people until he actually started conversing. He had been waiting for this all day but for some reason he

wished it would end. Jamie began to feel tense, frightened that he would ruin their friendship, frightened that Arnold would get mad at him, and frightened that this would not end well. Jamie breathed heavily waiting for Arnold to yell. However, Arnold just gobbled up his pasta having most of it in his stomach and the rest splattered on his face. Once again, the two boys were silent besides the sound of Arnold's disrupting stomach growls.

"Hey, buddy! You know what?" Arnold remarked, breaking the silence.

Jamie let out a sigh of relief and responded with, "What?"

"You should come over my house on Saturday. We could play on my Xbox and eat a lot of food. There will be popcorn and chips and dip and hot dogs and ice cream and pie and... and... basically anything you want," Jamie looked down and then glanced back at Arnold.

"I mean I - I want to but I don't know if I can."

"That's fine. Just ask your parents if you can. My parents won't care because my mom is in California and my dad probably forgot that I exist," admitted Arnold.

Jamie was shocked at Arnold's response but just replied with, "Oh, okay. I'll ask my mom if-if I could come over."

"That sounds good. Maybe I'll see you on Saturday."

"Maybe," Jamie stated. Beeeeeeep!

When Jamie's mother picked Jamie up from school, he told her all about his plan with Arnold on Saturday. Jamie's mother was feeling ecstatic but was a little bit worried since she had never met Arnold or even his parents. However, she decided to let Jamie hang out with Arnold. Jamie was a little nervous knowing that he would be going somewhere new without anyone but Arnold. It ended up working out great because Arnold taught Jamie all about Minecraft and Jamie taught Arnold all about the constellations and different types of stars. The two boys had a great time together and Jamie no longer felt scared when talking to Arnold.

The next couple of weeks were in favor of Jamie because he continued to stay relaxed when around Arnold. The two boys spent time with each other almost every weekend whether it was just hanging out at each other's houses or going to exciting events such as tennis matches. Jamie loved tennis and had always wanted to play, but no one allowed him to because of his physical condition. Although he constantly dreamed of this, Jamie had a strong feeling that it would most likely be impossible. Besides this, the only other thing that Jamie was not delighted about, was his grades in school. He was a very slow learner and his teachers understood that, yet when he compared grades with Arnold, Jamie never had the higher grade. Although Jamie may not have been the smartest kid, he knew that that was the least of his worries. He wouldn't let that bother him because he knew that the most important thing was to keep his only friend. As days went by, the two boys continued to talk at lunch and they even started to tell jokes and

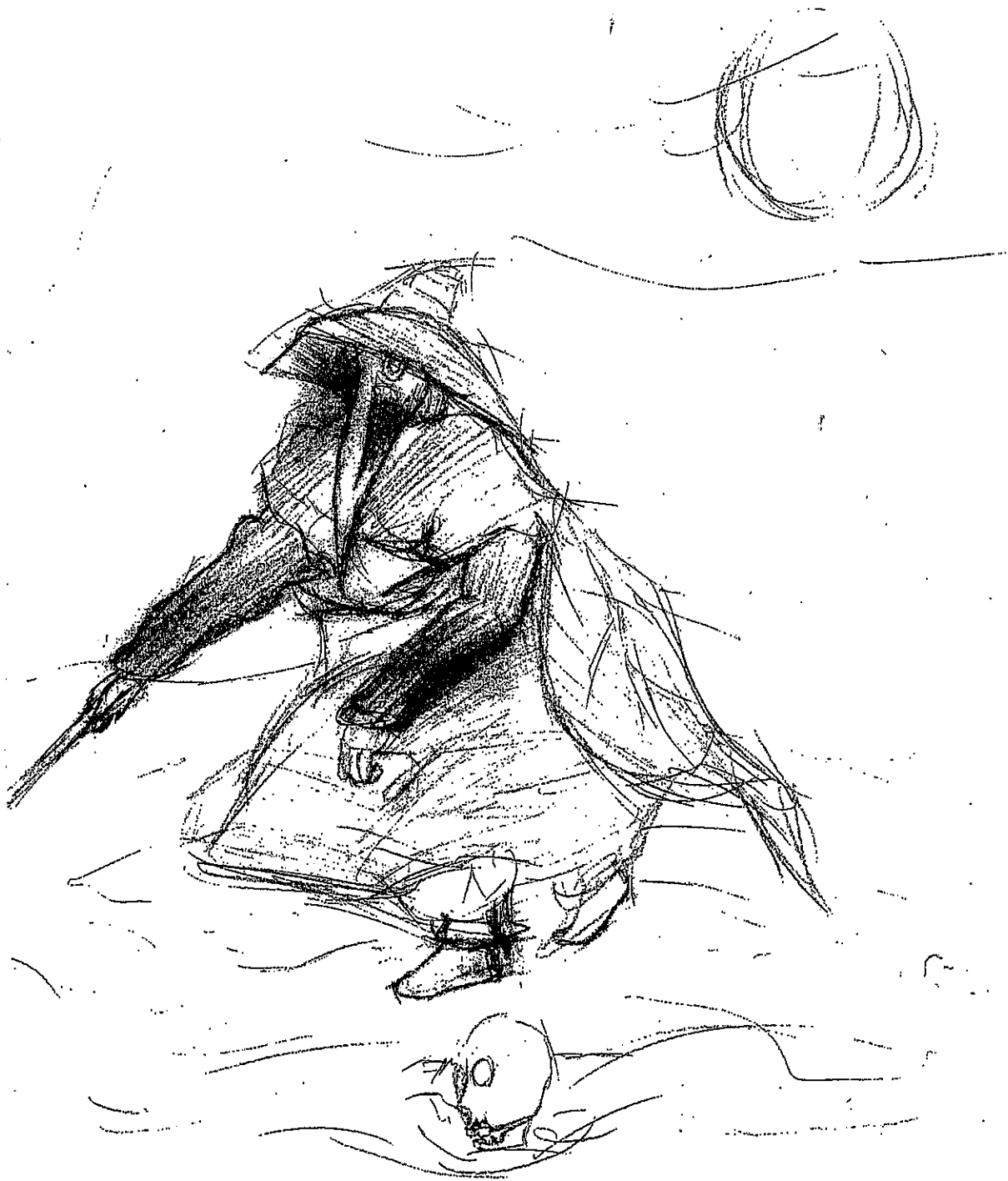
share secrets. Soon enough, the Christmas season was among them. Jamie and his family had a quiet break with some fun-filled days including Christmas. He got a new power chair and an Xbox which Jamie was super thrilled about. Jamie and his family also watched the sparkling ball drop from their television on New Year's Eve. The break unfortunately ended on January second but Jamie was overjoyed to see Arnold at lunch again. When they reunited, the two friends greeted each other with huge grins on their faces.

"Hey, Arnold!" Jamie exclaimed when he saw him standing in the lunch line.

"What's up, bro!" Arnold called in response. Jamie was glad to see Arnold once again. However, this lunch was different. Jamie and Arnold still sat at the corner table, but they saw something peculiar. At one of the usually empty tables, there was a small girl sitting all alone quietly eating her lunch. The girl had dirty-blond hair with sea green eyes covered by her red oval-shaped glasses. She nibbled on her macaroni and cheese while gazing around at all of the students as they talked with their friends. Jamie and Arnold had never seen her before so they assumed that she was new to this school. The two boys looked at each other thinking the exact same thing. Jamie wheeled over to her with confidence as Arnold slowly walked behind him while chewing on a burnt french fry.

"Hey. How do you like it here at Summit Middle School?" Jamie asked proudly. The girl looked up and smiled at the two boys realizing that today would be the day that she would make a couple of new friends.

Untitled
Evyn



Art and Life Go Hand and Hand

Bianca

Life
Oh Life
Life is too short

Art and life go hand
And hand
Like a paint brush
And some paint that is canned

Joan Mitchell
Miriam Schapiro
Sonia Delaunay
All were women
Who spent their lives painting
Abstract art

Which is how they spent their life
Abstract
If you don't understand me yet
Then...
Well...

They spent their life
Different
Out of the box
And well spent
With splashes of paint
Dots
And marks
Inside and out

Which is how we should spend our lives
There is no doubt

Life is too short to stay serious
So stay wild and curious

Even though we are not like those
Artistic women
We can still have fun
Even is fun is not given

Because...
Life
Oh life
Life is too short

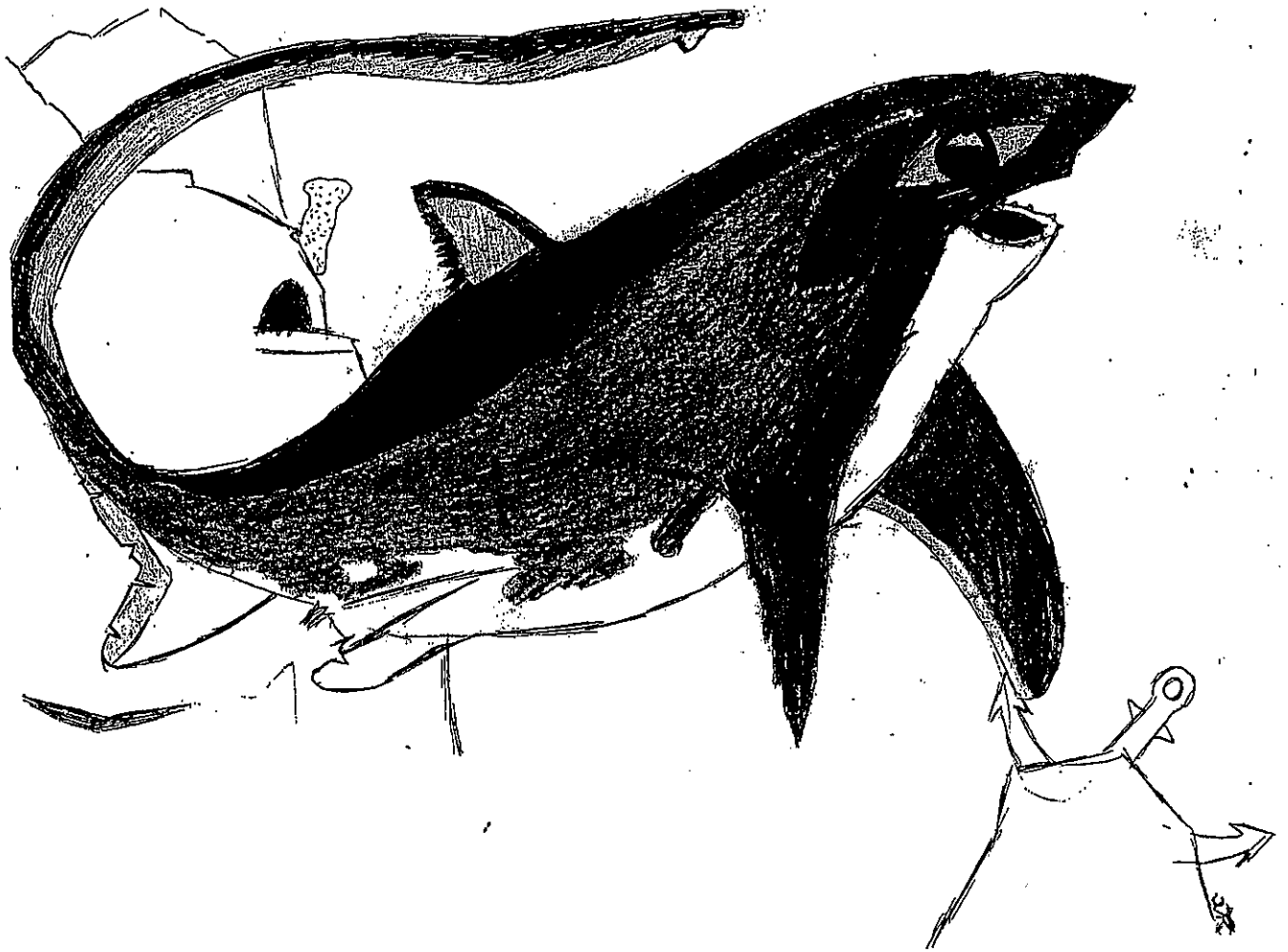
Forgotten Waves

Paige

The fine sand stuck between her toes. Looking over the wavy, ocean horizon, she thought about all the things the shore used to offer to her. A world that was once full of joy by being with family in the fresh air was now captured in a virtual world. Dings, rings, and clicks coming from around the cities and shops, interrupting the conversations. Buzzes, pings, and ticks radiating from fabric prisons, beckoning to come loose. The outdoors no longer stood a difference from the indoors. The girl by the shore, who was once at peace, was awoken by the ringing of reality.

Thresher Shark

Alex



Injustice
Makenna

Fight for justice,
No matter how hard the journey becomes.
Fight with all of the strength
That comes from the flames in your soul.
Fight because you want to live,
Even if you are weak.
Fight as long as you can
Despite the night surrounding you.
Fight with your heart
That is filled with your faith for a good end.
Fight with your lasting memories,
Even if they are being ripped from your life.
Fight for your right to do what you love,
No matter how much courage it takes.
Fight, not from the evil inside,
But from your love for the people you want to save.

Blessing and Curse

Anonymous

Achilles, a hero and a killer. The most violent but the most reliant. The only reason for this is he was immortal. So he thought. The story behind his immortality is quite simple, really. A long time ago, he was wandering when he stumbled upon a river of immortality. He got his mother to dip him into it, but while he was being dipped into the river, his heel was not touched by the water, which meant that he had a weak spot. He didn't know of his weak spot, so he never protected it. Finally, a long time after he became immortal, a bloody battle claimed his life. He was struck in his heel in the battle of the Trojan horse by an arrow. That's how temporary like achilles came to be. Achilles had blessings and a curse.

Under The Sea
Jacqueline

