



**San Francisco
Friends School
Literary Magazine**

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BABY SITTING FOR ZUZU

By Juliet A, kindergarten

Zuzu is a hamster who belongs to my friends Sasha and Gubby. She's brown and she has a pink tail. I took care of her two times, for 10 days each time. They brought her to my house in a cage. I kept it downstairs where all my toys are. It has a blue hamster wheel and a little wooden house for sleeping.

Hamsters are nocturnal. They sleep in the morning and wake up in the afternoon. Then you can pet them. Zuzu has a big plastic circle with a tube in it. She likes to sleep in the tube for one day, and then she comes out at night.

Sometimes she freaks out and starts running around in circles. That means she wants me to hold her and play with her. I throw a piece of apple or carrot and she spins around, then she eats it. She knows what game you're playing. I don't play with her on the rug. Otherwise she would run away and her owners would be really sad. I feel happy about taking care of her because she's really really soft and cute.



Hanna W, 1st grade



Evan G, kindergarten

THE FOUR CATS

By Eve H, kindergarten

Once upon a time there lived a cat named Chicken. She lived in the country in a house of paper with her momma cat, her dad cat, and her baby sister cat Pomegranate. A dog lived next door.

One day they were walking down the street and the dog barked and barked at them. They got so scared they ran. Soon they were so far from the house that they couldn't find their way back. Then they found a tree with a little hole in it, and they lived there. They found moss that they could lay on, and they found a little bit of fuzz for their pillow. The tree was beside a river. They couldn't find much food, so they put their whiskers in the water. The fish came up, and they quickly grabbed them.

One day the dad said, "Let's see if we can swim back home." He didn't know how to swim, but he just jumped in and did it. Then the mom swam with the baby. Chicken was so scared that she stayed. She thought about it until the next day, then she started swimming. A crocodile chomped on her tail, so she called her dad on her cell phone. He came and got her, and put a cast on her tail.

But they were still afraid of the dog. So they tricked him. They told him, "There's a bone in the tree." They swam back to the tree and the dog followed them. They went inside the tree and put a bone in there, then they got out. The dog smelled the bone and jumped in. The cats put a spider web over the hole so that he couldn't break through. He stayed there forever and always.

CHRISTMAS AT THE CLAREMONT HOTEL

By Audrey D, 1st grade

I go to the Claremont Hotel in Berkeley every Christmas with my grandfather. I wake up in San Francisco and open my presents, then my mom or dad drives me to Berkeley because that's where my grandfather lives. Usually my older sister hangs out with my Grandma at their house and my Grandpa takes me to the hotel.

Our cousin Pablo is about 4, and he goes with us because he hates being left out. His big sister Lila goes with us too. She's only three weeks apart from me. Grandpa has white hair, and the middle of his head is bald. We call him Grampsters.

The first thing we do there is run, because every year there's a giant gingerbread town. Usually it has about seven houses. They are filled with all sorts of candies and colors — candy ropes, Tootsie pops, Smarties, gummy bears, candy dolphins, blue frosting. My cousins and I tell my grandfather about every single candy.

Then we have a brunch lunch. We call it that because it's right between brunch and lunch. We always ask for the chocolate chip pancakes. They put whipped cream and strawberries on top. The dining room has white silk tablecloths and mirrors on every wall. If you look out the window, you can see little squirrels climbing giant palm trees.

Last year we did something really funny. We opened one of the maple syrups and put a little bit in my Grandpa's cup with orange juice to trick him. We said, "Drink the maple syrup," because he's the big jokester in the family and we were trying to get back at him. We wanted him to drink everything on the table. Then we said, "Drink the butter," which is pretty hard because it's not melted.

After the brunch lunch we go exploring. There's always something new to find in the hotel. There's an area where you can make your own gingerbread house, but we've never done that. Last year we found out that there's a pool. We got really mad because we weren't allowed to go in, but still we went in the shortest pool. Lila and I got soaked to our knees and my younger cousin got soaked to his hip. This year we will bring swimsuits.

We stay at the hotel for about three hours. Then Grandpa takes us back to his house and we play. After that, he drives us all back home. Later we go to a big Christmas party that our family has every year.



Virginia M, 3rd grade

THE GOAT FARM

By Clara J and Allegra K, 1st grade

This year we went on a field trip to Slide Ranch. We drove down a windy road, and when we got there, we got to make a name tag out of a leaf. We made up our own names about animals. Clara's was Clara the baddy bat.

Then we milked a goat. Her name was Raney. She was eating, and her head was in a wooden lock. There was a bucket under her. You had to put on hand sanitizer and squeeze the nipples. It was fun, but it was very hard because you had to pinch, squeeze, pinch, squeeze. We got a big bucket of milk.

We went around to a goat pen that had small baby goats that we could hold. They nibbled on our clothes and our fingers, and it actually felt good. The goats are so nice, and the baby goats can never really hurt your fingers when they chew on them.



Rylan W, 1st grade

The goat farm had a house that looked like a church. We went inside and they served us plates of goat cheese. We put flowers on it before we ate it.

After the goats, we went to the chicken coop. We were constantly staring at a chicken because it looked like it was going to lay an egg, but it never did. The chickens liked us to pet them. We met one that was called Fancy Nancy, and she didn't want us to pet her because she thought she was super perfect and glamorous.

We went in a pasture that had goats and sheep in different areas. They told us that the sheep were very old and needed a lot of care. That was the end of the day. We got in our cars and we went home. It was our favorite field trip of the year.

SUMMER IN ARGENTINA

By Lila M, 2nd grade

I go to Argentina a lot in the summer because my family lives there — my brother Francisco, my aunts and uncles, my cousins, and my Grandma's sisters. Both my parents are from there. My brother is 22.

We have a house there. It's in a small town. We have four floors to ourselves. The top floor is mine, the third floor is my sister Ambar's, the second floor is my dad's, and the bottom floor is my mom's. Each floor is like having a whole house to yourself. We watch a lot of TV there, all in English. The Spanish channels are for grownups.

In Argentina they have really good cookies called alfahores. They're like sandwiches: they have chocolate icing, caramel and dulce de leche on the inside and round cookies on the outside. They sell them on small carts on the street. You buy four of them in a bag. I can eat about four.

Every morning I drink hot yerba mate with agave syrup. My dad makes it for me. He puts it in a special kind of cup and I drink it through a straw.

My cousins have a backyard with a swing that hangs from a tall tree, and we take turns. I have a big cousin named Paloma: she's 28, and she pushes me really really high and I feel like I'm on an airplane and I'm going to fall.

It's hot in Argentina, but not super duper hot. The weather is awesome because the swimming pools and the water slides are all open. We go to a water park where you get popcorn and ice cream for free, and you get to feed the pigeons. I give them popcorn but half of the bag is mine. They fly up on my shoulder. My favorite pigeon is one with red and blue feathers. He plays tag: when I run away from him, he keeps running at me.

In the restaurants, you order the food, and then the mariachis come and start playing the guitar and violin and singing in Spanish. Everyone in Argentina speaks Spanish. We speak it at home in San Francisco, but I like English better because I was born here. I like speaking Spanish in Argentina because if you say hello to people on the street, they'll give you candy.

I don't know if I like San Francisco or Argentina better. When I'm here, I'm excited about being there, and when I'm in Argentina, I'm excited about coming back here because I miss my friends. I have friends in Argentina too, but the ones here are a little bit better because they understand me better.



Clara J, 1st grade

WHY I WANT TO BE A TEACHER

By Lily Z, 2nd grade

I want to be a teacher when I grow up because I think it's really exciting to teach, and because you get to dress up in teacher clothes like skirts and dresses.

I get to practice a lot when my cousins Gall and Tave come over. They are 9 and 10 years old. I have a backyard and a play house with a whiteboard, dry erase markers, a pointer and a calendar, so I use those for teaching. We switch off being teachers. We do math, writers' workshop, science, reading, and a lot of really cool activities.

If I'm teaching and they don't behave, I give them warnings. When they get the third warning, they may have to sit out for two minutes. I think I'm a better teacher than they are because I have more rules. They read better than me because they're older.

When I teach them how to spell a word, I write it big on the board. Say they want to know how to spell "story." I point to it and I say, "S-T-O-R-Y spells story."



Stella M, 3rd grade

I use a lot of early readers. Those are books like "Dinosaurs in Deep Trouble" and "Fluffy." When my cousins are ready, I give them chapter books like "Detective Dinosaur," "Magic Tree House" and "Harry Potter."

I want to go to Stanford for college because I think it's an awesome school. When I become a teacher I'd like to teach kindergarten or 2nd grade. I think I would like to teach reading the most because I think personally I'm a very good reader.

SLEDDING

By Sedi B, 2nd grade

Last Christmas, my family went to visit my granny and granddad in Canada. They own a big stone house and a little cottage beside a lake. It's their summer and sometimes their winter house. We were staying in the cottage, and my grandparents and all the other family were staying in the big house across the lake, which had the Christmas tree and all the decorations.

My older brother Jake and I were sledding on a little hill outside the cottage. It had lots of bumps. We went down a few times, and then Theo, my younger brother, came out, and he wanted to go too. He's 5. It was a two-person sled, but since he was small, we tried to put three people on the sled.



Fiona K, 6th grade

We ended up going at a slant, but we didn't notice. We crashed into a mound of snow that had ice underneath, so it was hard. We hit it, then the sled sprung up like a springboard and flipped over. We were upside down and the sled was on top of us. We were still sitting in the sled but our heads were in the snow. We just sat there until Jake could finally get us out. It was so funny. We were not hurt, but we got really wet.

We walked back up the hill, then went down again. It was perfect, except that the sled went underneath Theo, so he was left sitting in the snow at the top. We've been sledding loads of other times, but it was particularly fun that time.

When I go sledding, I wear long johns, fleece pants, a ski jacket, ski pants, mittens and a hat. I love it when you crash and you go flying out of the sled. I think the first time I went sledding was when I was a baby, but I can't remember that.

GLOOBOO

Story and picture by Emma G, 2nd grade

Last year, when I was in 1st grade, I made a toy fish in sewing class. I called him Glooboo. It was the first time I'd ever sewn anything. I made him out of sparkly blue material. I only made one half of his face: I just liked it like that. I made a little mistake on the tail, but never mind that. A little bit of stuffing can be seen, but usually you can just pull the string and it closes.

It was the first year I could choose sewing because you weren't allowed in kindergarten. I thought it would be easy to make a toy but it ended up being a few classes. I sewed it by hand. You need experience for dresses, and I didn't want to make a bag. Actually I made a bag for my sister on Christmas.

I still have Glooboo. He's still all together and I never had to replace any strings. He's in my bedroom. I made a jellyfish, a few other ocean animals, and seaweed. I made my Halloween costume. I was a vampire but you couldn't tell: it looked like a witch outfit.



I got a sewing machine for Christmas. My aunt Jane showed me how to use it. I do sewing with my dad; he's working on a quilt. I use the machine to make toys and outfits for toys. I like the skill of sewing: once you do it, it's so easy. When I'm older, I want to make my own dresses. I might become a designer.

I still take sewing with Crystal, my teacher. She teaches us how to sew by hand and undoes some of the mistakes. She draws the pieces for a pattern, and then we cut them out. I just made a rabbit. It's hand-size. One side of the ears is blue and one side's pink. Crystal got the pattern from a book. It's my favorite toy.

MY EYES OF TWO COLORS

By Cora W, 2nd grade

My eyes are blue and brown, but they were supposed to be green because my mom's eyes are green.

When I was coming out of my mom's tummy, I didn't want to come out, so they poked me with a needle and it accidentally hit me in the color chamber of my eye. One side of my face was crying and the other side was clear. Then as I grew, my eyes got their colors.

A lot of times you just forget because you can see normally, you can hear normally, and everything's normal. Just the colors aren't normal. I notice it when somebody brings it up. They stop in the hall and say, "Wow, are your eyes two different colors?"

I like having eyes of two colors. It's kind of cool because that's my very special birthmark. It's something that represents me, which not a lot of other people have.



Aila P, 1st grade



Hanna W (1st grade) and Naomi K (3rd grade)

THE MAGIC APPLE

By James N (3rd grade), Jack T & Max T (7th grade)

I knew I shouldn't have given her that apple. She started to hallucinate almost instantly. She stared at the apple for a long time. Then she started to scream and run hysterically through the streets. She threw the apple at a guy's head. Smack!!!! The apple exploded against his head and he was instantly unconscious. She ran away.

Rampaging through the empty streets, she obliterated 68/34 of the town. Godzilla rose out of the ocean to challenge her. She started flying at 95 mph. SMACK!!! She shot laser out of her eyes as she punched Godzilla. Godzilla fell back into the ocean. Then she fell out of the sky.

THE BLACK BLOB

By Naomi K, 3rd grade

My family and I went to Grandma and Grandpa's house, and when we went in their pool, I saw something dark and shadowy in the water. I closed my eyes and looked again, and it was still there! It had a head, but no neck or face, like it was made of clay. It was all black.

I didn't see anyone around except for my family, so I just forgot about it. When I went to bed, it was standing right at my door. I hid under the covers. It came closer, and then it pulled off my blanket.



Emma B, 4th grade

It said, "Come with me." The eyes and mouth were closed the whole time, so it was a mystery how it could actually talk. I looked, and I could see my parents inside it. I screamed, "Aaaaa!"

I should have warned the others earlier, I thought to myself. But it was too late. It pushed me into its stomach. While I was in there, I saw my family again. Then it let all of us out. We tried beating it up, but our hands and feet just went through it. My mom said that if it went out in the sun, it would melt. The blob yelled, "No, don't listen to her, noooooo!!!" It changed into a shadow and ran off. We had to stay up all night to make sure that it didn't get us again.

Early the next morning, we looked for it in all the dark places, where it could blend in. When we got to the very last room of the house, it was there. We turned on the light. But we needed sunlight to burn it.

The blob tried to run because our shadows were taller than it was, and looked like monsters. We scared it, and it went outside. It was very hot. We saw the blob melt and disappear. It never came back.

HAIR ON FIRE

By Marcos T, 3rd grade

When my dad was in boarding school, he had a friend named Paul, and only half his heart worked, so he was very pale and his lips were purple. Paul was part of my dad's group, and they were very good friends. One day Paul got a bowl cut, and all my dad's friends said, "Oh, that's totally lame! We're going to give you a haircut." I mean, who lets their friends give them a haircut?

Paul said, "Yeah, OK, I know you guys are going to mess me up, but don't make it too bad." He always volunteered to do funny stuff: boarding school gets boring.

My dad's friends finished up the haircut, and they were just putting hair spray over it. And my dad, just for a joke, wanted to make a spark, so he took out his lighter and clicked it in front of the hair spray, but far from Paul's head. Hair spray is extremely flammable. The spark must have jumped, because the spray became like a flame thrower. Paul's head caught on fire, and he ran out of the room. My dad screamed, "Oh my God, are you OK? Oh my God!"

Paul ran into the corner and covered his face, like he was crying. His hair was still on fire at the time. My dad got some cloths and started whacking his head to put out the fire. Just then Paul screamed out, "Gotcha!" My dad said, "What? What do you mean, gotcha? I just lit your head on fire." But the fire burned the spray liquid, not his head. Paul made us think he'd been hurt. Got us back!



Zeli G, 7th grade



Imani H, 2nd grade

INSIDE OUT

By Tess C, 3rd grade

Split. Done. Forever.

I flop down onto my rickety bed. I have just heard the news...

Last night at dinner my parents wouldn't speak to each other, not even a word!

"We have some news," mom whispers suddenly.

They take a glance at each other.

"Your mom and I are getting a divorce," pop growls.

I'm speechless. My mind wanders. They must be kidding! But April Fools was a week ago. I feel the world disappear around me. I dash up to my room.

"Boyd, you told her too fast!" mom yells.

I slam the door. Before I know it, I'm asleep.

"Kath-ie! It's time for school!" mom yells.

"Coming!" I yell flatly.

I dress my usual — hair in a ponytail with jeans and a cute T-shirt, then I head down the stairs.

"Bye honey, I love ya!" mom sings.

"See ya," I say dryly.

I'm dreading to tell the news to Jessie. I probably won't tell Jen or Samantha, but Jessie is my BFF. I see the yellow and black school bus come to a halt. Yellow is too cheerful for me.

"Hey Kath, what's up?" Jessie asks me.

"Nothing," I stammer.

"Hey, are you OK?" she asks.

"Yeah."

Jessie drones on and on.

"Kathie, are you sure nothing's wrong."

"Well, um, I, well I wasn't going to tell you this now, but my parents are kind of, sort of, splitting up." I'm close to tears. I can feel the hotness in my eyes building up.

Jessie's eyes go blank. "Kathie I'm *so* sorry! But you know you can tell me anything, right?" she says with a worried look.

"Yeah, I was going to tell you tomorrow. Oh well, we better go."

Later that day, I walk up the steps and take the key from my bag. Ahhh, home!

Before I know it, mom is there. "Hi, honey, I got Chinese food!" she calls.

"Be there in a minute!" I yell back. I bolt down the stairs.

"How was your day?" mom asks.

"Fine."

We sit down at the table. It feels different without pop. I picture him in a shack yelling, "Kathie, Kathie, Kathie!"

Later that night, after I have done all my homework and climbed into bed, I hear mom coming up the stairs to my room.

"Kath, you're *so* strong! You're taking the divorce so well!"

Then it all bolts out, "Don't say that word! It may seem like I'm fine, but inside my heart is burning! J-just leave!" I scream.



Stella M, 3rd grade

Mom's face melts quickly. "I love you," she whispers over her shoulder.

That night I cry myself to sleep. In the middle of the night I wake up. I feel bad about what I said, so I write a note:

"Dear mom,
I'm sorry I yelled. I love you with all my heart.
XOXO, Kathie.
P.S.: Why can't you and pop get back together?"

When I wake up I see a note on my door:

Kathie, I know this is hard for you. Boyd and I will *never* get back together. It just won't work. I'm sorry too.
XXX, mom

Sunday afternoon. I'm in the kitchen making mac & cheese for lunch when I hear mom on the phone with someone.

"Yes... Mmmh... the 31st... OK... Yep... Bye!"

"Mom, who was that?" I question.

"Oh, nobody," she whispers.

After lunch I go upstairs to do more homework. But for some reason I can't focus. I put my homework away. Then, just like that, I realize my mom had to organize the divorce, not me. She has to pay for school and food and all the bills, not me. This is harder for her than me. I need to do things for myself!

My days come and go, and *finally* I get to see pop!!!! Yay! I wait and wait, then I see pop's navy blue hybrid.

"Pop!" I scream so loudly people stare, but I don't care!

"Kathie!" I missed you *soooo* much!

I rush over to him and bury my head in his warm, soft chest. "I love you," I whisper.

"Ditto," he whispers back.

Even if my parents are divorced, I can do this!!

* * *

Author's note: If you do have divorced parents, I hope this has helped you. This story is not based on anyone or anything.



Maya S, 7th grade

MY FIRST SURF

By Luke C, 4th grade

When you were young, did you feel weird? Like, in the ocean a freakish shark would want to eat you for lunch? My point is, the ocean is kind of scary. You have to admit you'd be scared out of your pants if a crazy shark going for the kill was hot on your tail — or since we're human, your back or behind. EXACTLY how I felt my first time swimming at the beach. The day was going well until ... BANG! You see a kid surfing and want to try. Me? I took that path.

It was all dusty so I thought a lobster would pinch some daylight into my toes. Well, I didn't really want to lose my toes so I got on the board as soon as possible. Anyway, I didn't nail it and rarely even stood up. The first time, I clung to the board and inside my brain I was screaming my head off. Well, eventually I got fine with it and I'm in 4th grade now and was in 1st grade then, so it tells that I either have a good memory, or I remember it because I shattered the odd meter.



Camila R, 5th grade

CAMP TAWONGA

By Anna L, 5th grade

This summer I'm going to Camp Tawonga for my fifth year in a row. It's near Yosemite. The first time I went for one week, and said, "I have to go longer." Then I went for two weeks three times, and now I'm going for three weeks for my first time.

It's a Jewish summer camp, and if you go for two weeks or more, you get to celebrate Shabbat. You don't have to be Jewish to go there. It has boys and girls.

You get there in a coach bus — one of those nice buses that have bathrooms in them. The buses pull into a big parking lot next to Stonestown, and we make another stop in Oakland to pick up other people. It's about a seven-hour drive because we stop for lunch in Oakdale.

Once we arrive at the camp and get settled down in our cabin, the counselors will say, "OK, pick your bunk." After one minute, all the top bunks are taken. Most of the cabins don't have lights. If there is a light, then I like to sleep on the bottom because the moths fly around, and they sometimes land on your bed.

At the camp we play gaga, which is a Jewish sport where you pass the ball with your hands, and if it hits you above the knee then you're out. We go on backpacking trips: the last one I went on, we walked four and a half miles. When we got to the Tuolumne River and put our legs in, that was awesome.

Last summer we were having a dance class outdoors with a really good dancer who's on the staff. It started to rain, so we went under a little deck. Then it started to thunder and there was a big bolt of lightning, and we all got so scared. We had to run across a whole field to get to our cabin, and it was really muddy.

Once we got in there, we played some games, and read, and talked, and then we ran over to dinner. We came back after dinner and sat in a circle in the cabin. Our counselors told us that when it's raining and thundering and there's lightning, you should make a wish. We went around the circle and we each made a wish, and every five seconds you'd hear lightning, and it was scary, because I'd never seen that.



Isabel D, 5th grade

One of my best friends is a girl I met at Camp Tawonga. Her name is Jessica, and she lives in Walnut Creek. We both like doing makeovers. Sometimes I see older kids on the street and they have pretty makeup and I take ideas from them, or from magazines. Or I make up something that would look good with somebody's face and their outfit.

We both like to sleep over at each other's houses. We had a sleepover at my house. The good thing is that because she lives far away, she can't just come for a couple of hours. She has to sleep over. I've never been to her house, but I'm going to really soon.



Beckett A, kindergarten

WEEKENDS IN BOLINAS

By Asha M, 5th grade

I go to Bolinas every weekend with my family and my dog. It takes about 45 minutes to get there. I've been going there since I was 6. We have a house on top of a hill. It's really pretty there. You can walk to the beach in 5 minutes.

I have a friend there named Mila who's 7. She lives there only on weekends like me. Usually I ride my bike to her house. She has a little sister and a little brother and we like to play with them. We make talent shows. Sometimes we'll sing, or do a little mini play. She has a microphone so we can talk into it, and they have a piano we can play.

Bolinas is very small. It's hard to get lost. It has a little food store, a bunch of tiny shops and a hardware store, and one little cafe, the Coast Cafe. That's basically it. We usually eat at home. I've been a vegetarian since I was born. My parents are vegetarians too.

My mom and dad are artists. They do painting and drawing on the weekend. When they're doing art, I sometimes talk with them, but they usually work in silence. Mostly they do work for galleries. My mom illustrates some books too.

I used to listen to books on CDs and cassette tapes when my parents were working. I got them from the library and bookstore. Then my mom gave me an iPod, so now I get them on iTunes. I like the Percy Jackson series by Rick Riordan: I have all the books in the series. And I like to listen to the Mysterious Benedict Society by Trenton Lee Stewart.

My dad likes to go surfing. Sometimes I go with him. Surfing is pretty fun there because the waves are kind of mellow: they're not over your head. The water is usually cold. I wear a wet suit and a swimsuit.

I have clothes in both places, so all I have to bring is my pajamas. Usually we come back at night, so I'm already asleep and they just carry me to the car.

I wish I had more time in Bolinas. It's a lot calmer there. The weekend feels too short because I have a lot of friends there, and I don't have any homework, so I can draw, I can read, and I can have playdates with friends because they live really close. In the city I have homework and I hardly have any free time. So the weekends are really nice.



Olivia C, 1st grade

TIMEWARP

By Sam J, 5th grade

"They're lowering the gates!"

"Don't waver! Hold your ground!"

An ear-splitting shriek ripped across the wasteland.

"Dragons!"

"Ready the cannons!"

Enormous flying beasts the size of gorillas started grabbing soldiers and crushing them to death.

"Fire!"

Boom! Boom!

"Load again!"

"Look! Archers!"

Fifteen hooded figures appeared riding giant eagles.

"Take cover!"

A hail of arrows pierced the chests of the many soldiers who didn't put their shields up fast enough.

"What do we do?"

"I don't know!"

"Ready the blue cannonball!"

Those words hung in the air before everyone started screaming,

"Are you crazy?! It'll hit us too!"

"Get everyone out of the city!"

"So you're just going to fire the deadliest weapon in existence and hope it kills them?"

"Yes."

"Well, I have one word for you."

"What?"

"Godspeed."

"Fire!"

The enemy flamethrowers had breached my defenses. I had no soldiers left. There was no way I could win.

"GET OFF THE COMPUTER!"

A scorpion destroyed my last missile launcher.

"I'm not going to warn you again!"



Sam J (5th grade) and Zoe M (3rd grade)

The enemy had released the ogres I'd captured, and were storming the throne room when ...

"I warned you!" A stress ball hit me hard in the back of the head.

"Ow!"

"Get off!"

"Fine!" I yelled. I pressed Command-Q right when my king's head got closed off in a spray of guts and blood.

The game I was playing was Timewarp.

"Come eat breakfast!" my mom yelled from the kitchen.

"I'll get something on the way to school!" I yelled back.

"Get your backpack!"

"Got it!"

"Go!"

I ran out the door and down to the bus stop. I checked my watch: 9:30 a.m. Good. I won't be late for school.

MY NAME

By Julia K, 7th grade

My name is Julia-Rose Kibben-Cohen. Spoken, it is smooth and pleasing. On paper, it is choppy, never quite one piece, like a puzzle. It has many pieces, that fit only in one place. My name reminds me of cinnamon in frothy milk, soft and warm, with a dash of spice. Like a fluffy cloud floating in blue skies, it's a windy name, a name that needs a jacket. It's loose around the edges, but for me, it fits just right.



Carlyn S, 6th grade

I was named after family who'd passed. My Cohen side named me after my great-grandparents, Rosalie & Julian Rose. Just as I said, my name is a puzzle with many pieces, and together they spell Julia-Rose. There may be other people with my name, but I am the only one I know who is just like me. I've added the dash and made it my own, so that when people hear "Julia-Rose," they think of me.

People call me Julz. It started out like Jewels, like a gem, then became Jules, like Jules Verne. Then I made it my own, gave it my own alternate spelling, J-U-L-Z. A lot of people call me Julz. I like it, but it's not for all the time. It's for when I'm feeling fun, and hyper, but not for signing school papers. It's not serious like that. Not serious enough to be official. Just serious enough to be a nickname.

MY DOG WILEY

By Jake L, 7th grade

My dog Wiley is a drab yellow, and his fur is long and smooth. He has a goatee beard, floppy ears and a very long tail. We adopted him from the San Francisco SPCA. He's a terrier-lab-golden retriever mix. We named him after the cartoon Wiley Coyote. He's about a year old.

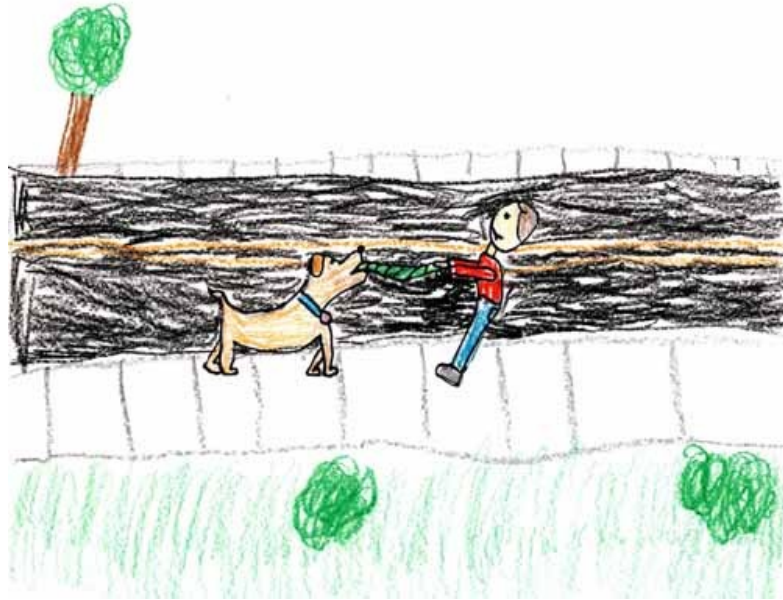
My mother chose him because he reminded her of our other dog that died. He looked very sad when we first brought him home. He was nervous because of the new surroundings.

He belongs to the whole family. He sleeps on my bed some nights and on my parents' bed other nights. My sister doesn't let him in her room because she thinks he will eat her toys.

He's very affectionate, and he's quick to realize emotions. If you are happy, he's overjoyed. If you're rambunctious, he gets excited. And if you're sad, he senses the helpless feeling and comes to your aid.

I play fetch with him at our neighborhood park. It has a big dog run with lots of grass and trees. We usually take a Chuck-it, which lets you fling a ball much farther once you throw it. He retrieves it and brings it back. He plays with other dogs there. His special friend is a hound named Scooter. He likes to play tug-of-war. I use a piece of rope with a knot at each end or a piece of rubber. He pulls on one end and I pull on the other. He usually wins. He's kind of strong and he cheats sometimes: he edges his way up the rope till he gets near my hands.

I run frequently with him. He's fast, and he's good about staying with me. We taught him to stop at the corner, so I don't have to worry about cars. To help him learn, every time we got to a corner, we told him to heel, then sit down, and then we gave him a dog cookie. Heel means to come up to your side.



Emma G, 2nd grade

Two days a week, when I'm at school, the dog walker comes and takes him out for two hours. The other days my mom or dad takes him on a couple of short walks. My mom does the most to take care of him, but I'm closest to him because he spends a lot of time with me and we play together the most.

We feed him Kibble twice a day. We throw in vegetables and fruit and peanut butter, and give him a lot of snacks. I enjoy his temperament, because he doesn't get angry or sad or frustrated. He doesn't growl: he's just very mild all the time. He's very good to talk to. He responds to what I say and he wags his tail.

THE TREE ON MY HOUSE

By Sofia L, 6th grade

When I was 8 years old, I was living in Portola Valley. Next to our house was an oak tree, 20 feet in circumference, that was the oldest oak tree in San Mateo County. It was about 450 years old and weighed about 50 tons.

One night my mom put me to bed, and about half an hour later we heard what sounded like an earthquake. All the lights shut off, my dog started barking, then a huge, huge boom sounded, and all was nothing.

I was laying in bed, and I was so scared. I had no idea what was going on. I heard my mom call my name, but I didn't respond. So she started screaming my name, and then I said, "Mom?"



Owen A, 6th grade

She came into my room, pulled me out of bed along with my dog, and we went upstairs to get a flashlight. We saw that the entire right side of our house was crushed with the oak tree. There were wires all over the grass. My mom got a bit hurt: she had to get two stitches. I started crying, and then our neighbor came over to get us.

After that, about 30 people in Portola Valley offered to let us stay with them. First we stayed at one of my best friends' house for two weeks, then we moved to a hotel for three weeks. There was a mini refrigerator in our room, and there were gummy bears stacked up high, which is heaven for an 8-year-old. Then we moved into my friend Annie's pool house because our hotel was so far away from school.

The pool house was small: it had a small bathroom, a small shower, a small bedroom, and a living room/kitchen. My mom slept in the bedroom and I slept on a fold-out couch. In the summertime it was really hot and there were bugs, but it was so nice living in such a small environment for a while, with no television or anything, that I got used to it, and it made me happy actually: it calmed me down a bit.

It took six months to get our house fixed. A cat got in the house and started living there, and the insurance company didn't do anything about that. They did something about the gigantic gaping hole that was in the middle of the bathroom. But otherwise, it was kind of lame of them.

I have a picture of my friend and me sitting on the fallen over oak tree. We chopped it up into bits, then gave the wood away. I missed the pool house because I loved having a friend so close by. At my other house there was only one neighborhood kid my age, and she went to a different school.

I think it was a good experience for me because I really enjoyed staying with Annie so long. We've been best friends ever since. I moved from Portola Valley to San Francisco last August, but we still see each other a lot.



Isa M, 1st grade

MY BASKETBALL TEAM

By Isy S, 7th grade

I'm going to tell about my basketball team, and how we played a hard game and won.

We were playing the team with blue and yellow jerseys, and the girls were nice and shook our hands at the beginning. But then as we got into the game, they started hitting us and swearing. One girl hit my friend in the face and my friend got mad. We were winning by a lot because the other team wasn't very good, and there are a few really competitive girls on our team. So their only way of not letting us win was hurting us. But our coaches told us to stay calm and to try to be as polite as possible.

In the end, a lot of my friends got hurt, but we won the game by 20 points, so were all happy. Next time we play that team, we're going to be super nice to them, then we're going to wait for them to hit us, and we're still gonna win.

I've been playing on a basketball team since the first grade. I like playing because it's really fun, and it exercises you so you don't get fat. This year we have almost the exact same team as last year, but it's a lot better. We're winning more games. I think it's because we've all practiced, and we've all got our different strengths, so we combine them and we do a good job.

We're in the 7th grade, but we only play 8th grade girls because our coach wants to give us a challenge. He says it teaches us, and it's good to do something that's harder, because then you feel prouder about yourself when you win.

My favorite part of the game is the fourth quarter, because there's a lot of stress, and whether you're losing or winning, it's still super fun. I've seen many fights. We make enemies fast. It's not like they hit each other, but they scream and swear, and sometimes foul each other and pretend, "Oh, I didn't do it on purpose." Sometimes it's on purpose, sometimes it's by accident.

I practice basketball every day — at my friend's house, at home, anywhere. We have a basketball net, and I practice shooting and guarding my brother, one on one. We play mostly 10 pointers, so the first person to get 10 baskets wins.

I am predicted to be 5 foot 10. The year after next I hope to play basketball at University High School. I've been wanting to go there since the third grade and play basketball there. From what I've learned about being a good sport and not taking revenge or hurting other teams, I think I'll have a good basketball future.



Lily D, 5th grade

SAN FRANCISCO

By Madeleine M, 7th grade

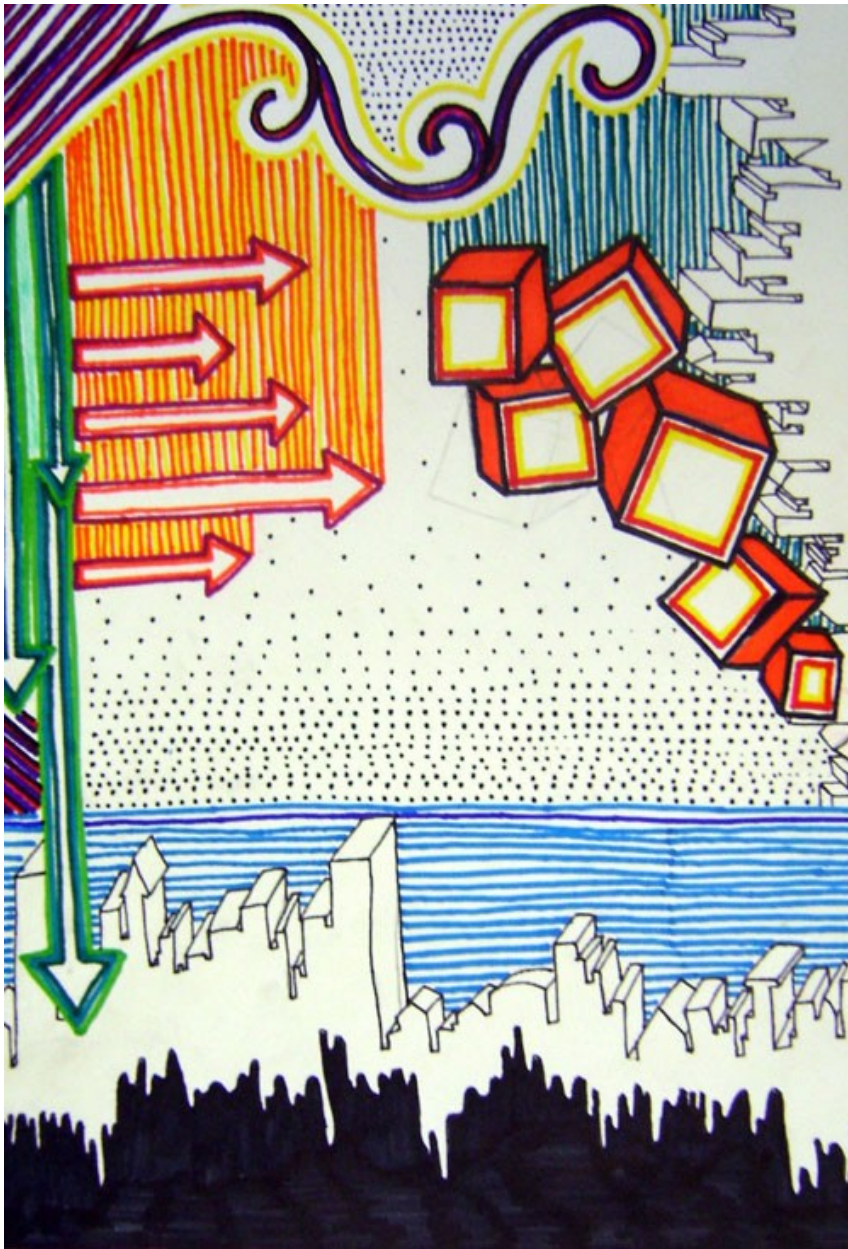
There are roughly four San Franciscos. There is, first, the San Francisco of the tourists. Come day they flock like pigeons to bread, to anywhere things can be bought. It's the San Francisco where nothing is too expensive and everything is clean. Come night they leave the Fisherman's Wharf area looking burnt out and dead.

Second, there is the San Francisco of the homeless — the ones who reside on street corners in the poorer neighborhoods. They swish their Starbucks cups pleading for spare change. The ones that some people spit at and others donate to.

Third, there is the San Francisco of the locals. They are the kids who find adventure in everything even though they grew up here. The seniors who smile at everyone as they hobble past. The adults with their noses in their iPhones and their heels that click click click. There are the teenage hipsters who participate in inspired rallies and drink 100% fair trade tea at the local tea shops.

Fourth, there is the San Francisco of those who live life out loud, to its fullest potential and in a million different colors. Whether they are drag queens or artists, they want life to be as much as it can be. Valiantly, they cross lines that have never been crossed before. They are the ones who give San Francisco its spunk and outlandishness.

Each of the different types of San Franciscans love San Francisco for their perception of the city. And although each of their perceptions is different, they all know they've stumbled upon a rare gem of a city.

Jesse V, 8th grade

THE DUST BOWL GIRL

By Rebecca T, 8th grade

Today is my eighty-sixth day at the Dentre Farms Work Camp. The drone of black flies is almost deafening, along with the shrieks of children and the yelling of the guards. It is raining today. I still have to work.

Back home in Oklahoma I would play in the rain with my two brothers and three sisters. That was before the dust came and blew everything away. I am the last child left. I am empty as it pours. Empty from a lack of food and siblings. The dress I wear is from a flour sack. Tonight dinner will be fried dough. In the rain my sack dress sticks to my skin. It sticks to me like dough sticks to my throat.

Today I am taunted by the same guards. The same ones who are two years my elder. Sixteen. My bushel of peaches is half empty. Empty like my stomach. Many peaches are bruised. Bruised like my skin and my soul. The flies still linger around the ditches. The sharp smell of human waste permeates the air. The rain washes the dirt off my itching skin, leaving it clean. Tonight I will walk to town and buy the flour and lard for our meal with our precious money. Our five cents.

We came for a better life, but now we have less. Tonight I will sleep between two pieces of canvas of the muddy dirt floor of the tent we must pay for with the little money we have. If they are trying to break me, I am already broken. Me the dirty Oakie. Dirty in their eyes. I am told I am nothing. My too-small shoes pinch my sore feet. My eyelids are heavy and tired. Tired like my weathered spirit.

In Oklahoma I knew my place. Here I am lost. Just another broken spirit, hopeless and crippled from impossible work. Work not meant for me. I cannot go to school. Schools do not want Oakies. I am the one who sits in corners at the gatherings. The guards get drunk and always lure young girls a few years older than me into their beds. I am afraid that it will happen to me. Afraid that I will die like the others here. Die from having no food or water. Die from being broken.



Leyli K, 5th grade



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