



TORNADO ALLEY

**The Literary Magazine of Dover High School
and Dover Public Library**

VOL. 8: SPRING 2022



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Dover High School
and Dover Public Library
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“Once Upon a Time”

By Aimee Basnett

The personal views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily represent the views of Dover High School or Dover Public Library.

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*Liz Strauss, Teen/Outreach Services Manager,
Dover Public Library*

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Advisor's Note

By Liz Strauss

Teen/Outreach Services Manager, Dover Public Library

This year, I'm excited, proud, and a bit sad to present you with the eighth edition of *Tornado Alley*.

I'm excited, as always, by the new set of creators who have decided to share their talents with the community. From funny stories and holiday memories to awesome art and expressive poetry, this year's edition may be smaller than what we've become used to, but it is mighty.

There is a lot to be proud of in this volume as well. Whether they were encouraged by friends, a teacher, a librarian, or are just finally old enough to submit a piece for publication, it takes guts to put yourself out there, and I am proud of each and every creator for sharing their hard work with the community.

There is also great variety to this year's submissions. Our creators have tackled themes of grief, self image, family, and depression. Some of these issues can be difficult to read and talk about. Our creators have been very brave in bringing these themes to light. It is our hope that the challenging pieces in this volume foster empathy, and we are proud to provide a place where difficult discussions may begin.

Finally, I am both proud and sad when I think of this year's

senior editor, Grace Williams. For five years, Grace has given her time, energy, and dedication to *Tornado Alley*. Two out of five years, she has been our *only* senior editor. Every year, she works hard and adds valuable discussion to the selection process. Unfortunately for us, Grace is graduating high school, making this year her last year as a *Tornado Alley* senior editor. It has been a privilege and a joy to work with such a **bright and capable young woman**. I'm sad to see her go, but I know her next chapter is waiting, and nothing can stand in her way.

After all, *Tornado Alley* has a new chapter coming, too. What will next year bring? Who will step up to keep this awesome magazine going with art, fiction, creative non-fiction, poetry, and editorial skills? For that, we'll have to wait for Volume 9.

For now, I hope you enjoy *Tornado Alley Volume 8!*

Senior Editors' Notes

Grace Williams

Grade 12



Over the last five years as a Senior Editor of *Tornado Alley*, I have had the pleasure of reading and viewing many beautiful works of poetry, fiction, nonfiction and art from teens around the county.

This year has not been any different. *Tornado Alley* allows teens to share their stories of excitement, hilarity, heartbreak, and sadness with the community, and I feel lucky to have been a part of it for the last five years.

I want to thank everyone, from the students who submit their work to my fellow editors and readers, who have made *Tornado Alley* such a special magazine to be a part of. Finally, I want to thank Liz Strauss for making all of this possible and creating a welcoming and supportive space for young writers and artists to share their work with their community.

I am so happy to have been a part of this magazine, and I thank all of you for taking one last walk with me through our *Tornado Alley*.

The Sticky iPad Kid
Allison Carlisle
Grade 9

Note: I tried my best to summon my inner angsty tween for this so I'm sure that everyone can relate to *some* part of this story in one way or another.

All of us older cousins know the struggle. Picture this, it's Thanksgiving. You're at Nana's house. The whole family's here, the smell of turkey in the air. The adults are arguing over politics and the kids are playing tag. And what are you doing? Hiding out in the bathroom. The *only* place that you can be alone for a millisecond without Aunt Jenny asking about your U.S. capitals test that you took seven months ago, or Uncle Jeff asking for your input on how well his favorite sports team did in the Sunday game. A place of peace. Serenity. Calmness. And then the furious pounding sound upon the door, chasing you out of your spot. Suddenly, you're standing alone in the hallway, the sounds of your family making the once large space seem very small. Finally, after much contemplation, you decide to make a run for it, entering the living room at great speed. You head for the corner of the couch, in the corner of the room. It's not as good as the bathroom, but it'll do. You relax, thankful that the kids are now occupied by the assortment of bread that has been placed on the table.

“Do you have any games on your phone?”

Your whole body cringes. You look up, seeing your little cousin staring wide eyed back at you.

“Yes?” you say, examining the kid’s hands. They have a slight glimmer to them. It’s either glitter or jam. And you don’t want to find out which.

“Can I play them?” they say, their sticky mouth stretching into a grin. Definitely jam.

“No, go get your iPad if you want to play a game,” you say, leaning away slightly. Their hands reach up to their face, smearing the jam on their hands everywhere. They pout their lips at you before they take off across the living room. Ew.

“I’ll just play Minecraft then,” your cousin says. You peer at them from over your phone to see them holding their iPad in their sticky little hands. They smile as they turn the volume up to 100 and start playing their game. All you can see is the jam getting spread around the screen, and also how your cousin is slowly inching towards you, their grimy hands getting closer and closer.

You leap from the couch, willing to make an appearance in the kitchen as long as it gets you away from the little kid hands and the sticky iPad.

You gulp down the fear that is in your throat and walk into the kitchen, only to hear “So kid, how’d you like that last Football game? Our team coulda been better, eh?”



Ahsoka Tano
Cassidy McKee
Grade 6

Scarf
Max Hershberger
Grade 12

Oftentimes, as the seasons go by, people forget what has come **before in favor of what's ahead**. No sooner does the tree lose its leaves **than people look for flowers...** **no sooner have the** midterm exams been completed than students begin to dread the **finals...** **no sooner does an** election end than people look on to the next one. Humans can be short-sighted, **it's true**. **But in** my experience, they are more likely to betray what they once held dear with long-sighted visions.

When I was younger, I was worn around the neck of a child, like a uniform or badge of honor. I remember we would run through streets when the cold had seeped into the ground, infecting the earth with a kind of clarity. There was that stillness which comes with cold- the sense that the closed schools and the untouched snowfall lays as a personal haven for just the two of us.

There were other children, too, of course. Some days we played together, side by side. Other days we would shun the company of others to enjoy the day by ourselves. We would go up to **Roger's Hill**, mostly. **It had a different name** the adults would call it, but we always remembered **it as Roger's Hill**. **Roger Hatch** had gotten a black eye one day when all the other kids had dared **him to throw a slushball at an older kid's back**.

Unfortunately, the big kid had turned around just as Roger was throwing the projectile. Poor Roger.

So it was always Roger's Hill to us.

I remember sitting up there for long periods of time, looking at the town below us. It always seemed so small, like we could just reach down and scoop it up in a hand if we wanted to. The long hours there served as sanctum against all that had happened before. And all that would happen in the future (or so it seemed to me).

I remember one time we were running around in the embankment off our street making snow angels and laughing our heads off, when Amy Lodge ran up to us. "Hi, Nick," she said.

"Hi", we said back to her.

"Are you out here all by yourself?" she asked. Everyone knew Amy could be a bit nosey at times.

"Yeah. Are you?" Nick replied.

"Oh no." She twirled one of the strings hanging off her mitten. "Well, I am now. But I was just going to hang out with Tom and Kesha."

Nick sat up. He was friends with Tom and had a bit of a crush on Kesha.

"Would you like to join us?" Amy asked.

Nick shrugged. "Sure."

He got up and started walking with Amy. Together, the three of us walked up the street and over to the little hill that sits just beside the pond. The pond used to be open for skating in the winter, but a boy had fallen through a few years back. His parents had gotten him out of the water in time, and he had been fine afterwards, but the city had put up a sign saying it was illegal to go out on the ice anymore.

Amy stopped and wheeled around to face Nick. She bent down on her knees, cupped her hands around her mouth and shouted, “OKAY, HE’S HERE!”

All of a sudden Nick and I felt a harsh splash of cold from behind. We turned to see Cory Brookfield, a kid from the middle school a few streets down, recoiling from his throw. Beside him was Watt Cullings, another older kid. We were so **focused on those two, we didn’t see** the movement to our right until it was too late. Another slushball crashed into the **side of Nick’s** face, coating it in a wet moisture that cut like little knives before it started to burn.

Realizing that we were surrounded by kids, all of them bigger, older, and faster than us, we started to run. We knew we had to get out of there quick. Through it all, we could hear Amy Lodge across the hill, warm as could be, laughing her head off.

By the time we got home, we were so waterlogged we had no choice but to go inside. Nick curled his fingers around me and slowly, carefully unwrapped me. Instead of putting me in my regular place on the coatrack, he brought me into the living room and put me on a ledge so I was stretched out in front of the space heater. Nick took off the rest of his outer clothes so that all he had on was his Doctor Strange shirt and pants. He laid down beside me, stretching his

hands as close to the heater as he dared to try to get warm. I hung there, letting the radiating fire curl through me, slowing but surely evaporating the cold tendrils that had snaked their way so close to our heart.

But one year we hardly went out at all. Instead Nick sat at home, crouched in his room. He played on his PlayStation all day. We went out less and less every passing year, and for shorter and shorter intervals. Soon we virtually never went out. **I watched from my perch in Nick's** closet, as other kids came over to hang out with him. They would laugh and joke and play video games together. I would overhear him making plans to go with them to the movies. I would see him getting ready to go to dances and go on dates with girls. I always figured it was just a passing fashion, like when Nick was little and he would refuse to put his pants on in the mornings before school. I thought that right up until he packed up his things in hard cardboard boxes and took them away with him. It was five days before I realized he may not be coming back, and nine more before I accepted the fact.

I sat there, in that small, dark place for a long time. The **years passed slowly by.** Nick's mom sold the house, with me left inside it. The new owners were an older couple with no children. The next owners had kids, but they had their own scarves they wore out on snow days. Sitting here through the years, I can still feel the sting of betrayal as surely as if Nick had left only yesterday. **It's easier to harbor hatred than to** torture myself with memories of shared love and adventure. My soul is like the inside of a cave, forged in the fires of emotion and passion, but left cold and hard after so much time has passed. And yet, in that death-like state, I still feel the small hope that one day a new hand might find me. If I picture it in my mind hard enough, I can almost feel it now:

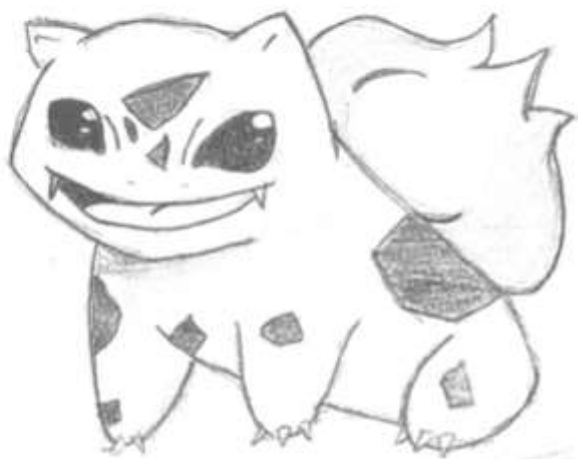
The hand wraps itself tightly around me, not in a menacing way, but as a sign of security. It pulls me around a neck and loops me... once, twice, three times. I can feel the subtle throbbing of the neck. We walk toward the door, open it, and step out to hear the sounds of laughter and requited love once more.



Mimikyu
Cassidy McKee
Grade 6

Trepidation
Kaden L. Wood
Grade 8

A feeling of dismay
That never goes away
A constant angst waiting to end
The dark swallows the most unmindful victims
Staying inside is a basic dictum
Not aware of what's outside
Isolation is the best way to hide.



Bulbasaur - 001, seed Pokémon
The seed on its back is filled with nutrients. The seed grows steadily larger as the body grows.

Bulbasaur
Cassidy McKee
Grade 6

Old Boots
Sydney McCabe
Grade 8

I watched my little sister crawl over to the front door. She clumsily tried to pick up Grandpa's old boots. Her tiny, little fourteen-month-old hands couldn't support the weight or quite grasp the laces. She sat there and looked at me, "What, Celia? Do you want to go outside?" She shook her head no. I knew what she really wanted. I just didn't want to say it out loud; she wouldn't be able to comprehend it. I'm almost fifteen, and I barely can.

Grandma baked an apple pie in the kitchen, I could smell it wafting through the open layout of the old farm house my great-great-grandpappy built. I went over and sat down beside my sister, I lifted her after contemplating what to do for a while. I walked into the kitchen and handed Celia to Grandma Janis after she wiped her flour covered hands on her dirty hand sewn apron. I walked away and hopped onto the counter across her by the open window that let in warm summer air and natural light. I looked out and smiled, then looked down at my white socks and jean shorts. I was so excited when the four of us first moved in with Grandma, I still am in a way. Excited, but not the fresh adrenaline kind, more the this is everyday and I still love it kind, the traditional kind.

"How's it?"

“It is.” The way we talked made little sense if any, but I liked it. Grandma J said when I was little I couldn’t pronounce ‘going’ so I dropped it. “Celia was sitting by Grandpa’s boots again.”

“Oh, was she? Well I guess that means another story today!” She laughed. “How about when my old granddaughter tripped in the well?” She winked at me. “She was outside with Grandpa Don working in the shed.” She wasn’t talking to me anymore at this point, but rather to Celia. She stared off at the workshop beside the chickens and well. “They were working on the green Ford pickup that now sits in the garage. When I called them in for deli lunch time and leftover pie and homemade chips and their favorite, huge glasses of sweating iced sweet tea, Sissy here, thought it’d be a good idea to come running full sprint towards the open back door. She ran right into the well, scraped her knee and fell in the cold water. Grandpa told her to press against the wall, and he slid in with her! He pushed her out and said, well what’d he tell you, JJ?”

“That I had a great idea, and it felt wonderfully refreshing down there!” I laughed at the memory. Good thing that wasn’t the drinking water well. “You came running outside with a washcloth and wiped away the blood on my knee.” I looked up and out the window; I swear I felt a breeze but it was perfectly still out, a picture, not a windy day.

“That’s right! My favorite part too. He was crazy wasn’t he?”

“That’s one way to put it,” I said with a scoff. Grandpa was the only one that appreciated my humor. Everybody said I was a tiny, little copy of him, same in every way except the obvious. He liked my sarcasm that my mom considered rude. I looked over at grandma. Janis Don Smith Jr, named after both

grandparents on my mom's side. I was proud of my name, so I went by Don or JJ. I let people know my name was shared with the best people ever.

Right then the buzzer on the old alarm went off. Grandma set down Celia, who crawled back out to the boots. I walked after her slowly as Grandma opened the stove. She pulled out the pie, and the cinnamon smell overtook me. I glanced back, the perfect criss cross on top as always. Celia looked at me, "I know, Lia, I know," I grabbed the boots and put on my own. I scooped her up and set her in her seat at the table. Grandma asked where I was going; I said I had to do something. I shut the screen door behind me as I walked out on the back porch. I ran as hard as I could to the shed, crying, I left Grandpa's boots by the front door and went inside. I covered my mouth with my hand as memories of the shed flooded back. I turned around, walked out and sighed. I shut the door and walked back toward the house wiping my eyes. Grandpa was gone, I'd never be able to change that so I won't try. I'll only remember him for who he was before the inevitable disease of old age got him. He was eighty-four and died in his sleep.

"Are you alright, sweetheart?" Grandma asked as I sat down to eat my pie.

"Yeah, I'm okay." I smiled staring down at the pie. It tasted like home.

A Festive Ballet
Nevin Wise
Grade 12

Tic... toc ... tic ... toc. The clock seemed to never move. It was like the hands of the clock were seen through the lens of a slo-mo camera. Frankly, I was bored. I looked out the window for a while to view nature's beauty. The fresh pile of snow was being covered once again by oncoming powder. The trees bare clear ice points that were sharp enough to cut steak. A gray color that only means snow is on the way filled the sky. My thoughts were interrupted with the sound of quarreling. I rushed upstairs, leaving my room, to find my sister and brother fighting over who knows what. "You give that back."

"No, it's mine."

"Why would I give that to you?" I rushed in to break them apart.

"You better stop fighting before our parents get home or you both will get into trouble," I demanded. "Now go and get ready so we can leave as soon as they get here."

They raced upstairs to see who could be ready faster. I headed downstairs and got ready swiftly, just not as fast as my siblings. I finished getting ready by putting my shoes on which tied my outfit together, a red crew neck sweatshirt made of the softest cotton, a pair of gray khaki joggers which cuffed at the ankles making the pants have wrinkles all over, and my coat that has kept me warm through the coldest of weather. My brother and

sister were dressed for the occasion, wearing what they thought made them appear sophisticated.

The sound of the front door being opened meant it was time to go. Our mother walked in the house as we walked out into the snow-covered landscape. My brother, sister, and I met our stepdad in the car. A couple of minutes later, we were all in the car and on our way to Cleveland. The seemingly long journey took no more than five minutes, for I slept through almost all of it. I woke to the sight of cars, buildings, and Christmas lights that were not turned on. The buildings made us seem like nothing but ants. They engulfed the sky, the gray snowy sky. Cars beeped and honked as if it would make the traffic go faster. Windshield wipers were put on max speed to allow drivers to see a little bit ahead of them. We had finally reached the performance center when the silence was broken. “I can’t wait to see this ballet,” my sister proclaimed.

“Well I hope it’s worth the trip,” my stepdad replied.

“With this many people here, it has to be good,” my brother added.

We got out of the car to find ourselves standing in front of a massive building. Stone columns wrapped around the edifice which created archways one could walk through. A set of stairs led us into the center. Scarlet carpeting filled the rooms which established a welcoming mood. My mom made the joke, “I have always wanted to walk the red carpet.” I laughed at the pun and gave my ticket to a worker in order to pass through. The doorway led us to a massive room which was filled with tables that held bowls of fake fruit and people dressed up in tuxedos and elegant dresses. In this room, we met our grandparents. We all went to our seats and sat down. Then *The Nutcracker* began.

Ballerinas twirled and danced and leapt across the stage to the audience's enjoyment. The props and costumes are what made it really come alive, like the scene of Moscow that was painted so delicately, ensuring every stroke made a contribution to the overall work. The seventy-foot Christmas tree that arose from the ground, indicating the main character had shrunk, was decorated from star to trunk. The sled of an ice queen moved on stage without the push from any cast members, allowing one to envision the movement from one setting to another. The hand-crafted costumes pushed the point of character. The Rat King was suited with a crown that sat upon his rodent head, which made everyone imagine an actual king. The Nutcracker himself wore a red coat, a tall hat, and he carried a plastic sword showing his toy-like aspect. The sugar plum fairy wore a beautiful purple dress that moved with her as she danced. Before I knew it, the cast came out, bowed, and the curtains closed. We left the giant building and chatted about the ballet. "That was so good," my grandpa commented. "My favorite part was the dancing at the end."

"I agree, but my favorite part was the beginning when the Nutcracker fought the Rat King," I stated.

"No way!" declared Deacon, "The part when the Nutcracker and the girl danced together was the best."

"Did you even watch the ballet?" sassed my sister, "Because if you did, you would know the best part was when everybody danced at the party." We continued to debate until we reached the car. Then the question was asked, "What are we going to do now?"

My mom answered this with, "I am grabbing my coat, then we

are walking over to the park.”

We did as instructed and headed over to the location. When we arrived, everybody stood in awe. Lights covered the trees, the pathways, the park buildings, and the monuments. Reds and greens blended together, and the blues made the snow shine. To walk in, one had to pass an arch made entirely of lights that could change colors in a spiral fashion. Even the grass had lights that complemented the whole experience. At that moment I realized my desire to move to a big city. So much happens in big cities that I could never be bored, and the beauty they express topped the cake. This memory will always be held close, for it allowed me to take a look into my future but have a fun time doing so.



Once Upon a Time
Aimee Basnett
Grade 11

So Plain Illaine
Kaden L. Wood
Grade 8

Reader's Advisory:

This poem contains sensitive material that may prompt discussion on serious mental health issues.

Illaine was the normal cliché
Super plain,
she was a gorgeous girl
Usually social and kind
Brown beautiful curls
Everyone loved her
She's Transcendent,
Immanent Plus Immutable
But she felt like her skin is unsuitable
She didn't get on anyone's nerves
She worked hard for everything she earned
She had everyone's ideal youth
But she hid an ugly truth
There was no sign of her inner angst
In her deep brown eyes or on her beautiful features
But when we take a look inside
Her Mentality stretched to lengths and her mind was full of
deceivers
When she gets home she wipes her makeup that covers her eye
bags

She tears away the baggy jeans that hide her thinning thighs
She rips her sweatshirt that hides her scars
She hides away in her room for hours on end
Her insides are bent
Nobody will listen to her vent
Good ol' plain illaine
Hide the pain illaine
Don't listen to your brain illaine
The one thing that will stop the strain is the femoral vein
As she lays calmly in the tub
She washes in the pool of blood
And As she closes her eyes
And as she remembers all the good times she starts to cry,

...

“You're such a pain, Illaine.”



Pokémon Trainer
Cassidy
Cassidy McKee
Grade 6

Do Things Happen For A Reason?

Kylie Charlton

Grade 9

An excerpt from Do Things Happen For A Reason

Growing up in a family of three has always been interesting. But one thing I loved about it is I've always had my sister Sarah. My mother and I always had a rocky relationship. After my dad and her split apart we weren't as close because I missed my dad a lot. Sarah has always been close to our mom and I was always closer to our dad. Sarah was only four when my mother and dad split apart so she doesn't remember him like I do. A year after that happened, my mother suggested counseling for us. My mom and I would fight all the time, but my sister Sarah has always been my rock through all this, and the last thing she needs from me is more problems.

It's already Monday morning, and school is feeling so boring. My teacher Mr. Zeen just taught us about random stuff in Science and I don't really care for that class anyways. I at least try to pay attention just for Sarah's sake. Sarah enjoys Science, and she is always ahead of the game. It is so interesting, the things she comes up with in her little mind; she surprises me everyday with the things she learns. I wish I had my sister in my grade because she is literally the only friend I have. I'm not really great at socializing with kids my age. Today's walk home with her is quiet, but I figured she was just thinking about one of her great theories. She comes up with ten every day. I went straight upstairs to my bedroom to start on my homework, and, before I

knew it, in came Sarah. I figured she was going to tell me something I didn't already know yet.

“Do you think things happen for a reason?”

“I'm not sure, why do you ask?”

“Well today in class, we were talking about things happening for a reason, and I have to write a paper on it, but I'm not sure if they do or don't.”

“Well, I'm not sure they do, but give yourself some time to think, and it will turn out great.”

“Thanks!” I wasn't in the mood to help her with this assignment. Even though Sarah is only eleven, she is very bright for her age. She got to skip sixth grade, and now she is in seventh.

“Margaret, you need to come downstairs right now!”

“What do you need, Mom?”

“You need to walk your sister over to the library for me, dear.”

“Ok I will be down.” I really have no interest in taking my sister to the library, but what could I do about it? My mom is always lecturing me about getting my license since I am sixteen, but I don't mind walking. I really love my mother, but sometimes I just wish she could take Sarah because I just wanted to come home and relax.

“You know what I think, Margaret?”

“What, Sarah?”

“I think that there might be the same people like us just on a different planet.”

“Where is this even coming from?”

“Well I was reading in this book about planets, and it got me thinking about how there could be thousands of us on different planets.”

“Maybe you’re reading too much about planets. Don’t make yourself crazy, Sarah, you are already smart enough.”

“Well, I wish kids thought of me like that at school.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Well, kids at my school think I’m this weird dumb person.”

“Do you think that of yourself?”

“No, but sometimes I think they’re right.”

“You can’t believe what others think of you. It’s not true. You are obviously smart. They’re just jealous.”

“Yeah, I guess.”

“Okay, now let’s cross the street so we can get to the library; my feet are killing me.”

“Okay” Sarah starts laughing. Waiting by the side of the road, we waited for the light to turn red. As the light turned red, we walked across the street. At this very moment, I didn’t

realize that this might be the last time I ever saw Sarah. “Hey we should go to the candy shop after this, Margaret.”

“Okay, well, alright... WAIT! SARAH, MOVE OUT OF THE WAY! NO, SARAH!”

Sarah screamed.

I stopped in disbelief. I could feel my body freeze, and my heart drop, and everything around me went dead silent. My whole body was completely stiff, and then I started screaming at the top of my lungs. I yelled, “HELP SOMEONE CALL 911!” Tears started forming in my eyes. I see Sarah on the ground, dirt and scratches all over her body. “Sarah, look at me! Sarah, please say something!” The silence grew even louder; everything seemed like it was in slow motion.

I looked down and saw Sarah mouthing something, Sarah began to say “I... love... you...,” and then her eyes began to close.

“No! Stop! Come on, keep your eyes open please, Sarah, please! SARAH!” I yelled. The sounds of the sirens grew louder, and I could feel my heart beat through my chest. I was sure that I was dying, and I felt so sick. Next thing I knew, everything went black, and I was sure of it that this was the end, and I would never see Sarah again.



Flying High
Grace Williams
Grade 12

The Spirits of the Woods

Eden Beal

Grade 6

The deep, seemingly endless trees loomed over the mossy ground. My hands brushed pale lichens clinging to the bark of a tree as the dead pine needles beneath my feet crunched. The farthest I could see through the trees only resulted in an eerie gray color. My long, brown hair fell over the sides of my face as I went on into the wood, not caring whether or not I would get lost; **it hadn't entered my thoughts.**

In fact, I seemed to have hardly any thoughts at the time — just me and the wood, and my burning curiosity for the woods. I **didn't follow a path; I just kept going wherever my feet could step.** I gasped silently when I stopped in front of an enormous fallen tree. I climbed onto the top of it by stepping on the small branches. I stood up and slowly looked around the wood.

Endless trees, I thought. Just then, something bright white flashed in the corner of my eye. I whipped around, nearly **tumbling off the tree.** “Ah!” I cried, **gripping a stick and falling** to my knees. As I knelt on the rough and knobby bark, I searched for what I had seen, if I had seen anything at all.

Suddenly the wood fell silent. No birds cheeping, no breeze in the trees. It was a peaceful, yet unsettling silence. I shivered. Then a loud and booming echo sounded out throughout the **wood for miles, like the beautiful echo that ice makes when it's**

pounded on with a stick.

I looked up at the trees nervously. The warbling echo faded slowly away, back to silence. I stared at one place, narrowing my eyes. There were two trees about two feet apart, with thin, ghoulish mist slowly winding up their trunks, like the ghosts of snakes. I blinked, fascinated, and gasped loudly to see a spirit-like creature made from swirling mist when I opened my eyes.

It seemed to resemble a ghostly sort of wolf, yet its eyes glowed white and its paws disappeared in delicately swirling white mist. It stood still, but the mist around it slowly moved. It gazed wisely at me with its white eyes. I sat, frozen, on the fallen tree, my jaw hanging open, and my eyes wide with confusion and shock. The wolf finally turned with the mist and ran into the air higher and higher and out of view.

Determined to find out more, I hurriedly slid off the tree and ran past the two trees where it was. I looked up and saw not a wolf spirit, but an owl. One with a heart shaped face and glowing white eyes like the wolf. It was staring down at me from a high perch on a branch. Then it silently and gracefully glided off further and turned around a tree and out of sight again. I ran on, panting, to the tree and looked up. The owl was gone. I desperately looked around on my level, then noticed a fox spirit of mist, sitting calmly next to a sapling.

The fox pricked its ears and cocked its head slightly. I smiled, **“Hey there, what are-”** Before I knew it, I stopped my words as the fox flashed away, leaving small bits of swirling mist remaining. **“No! Don’t go!”** I cried, realizing that the mist creature had totally vanished and not gone anywhere. I knelt in front of the remaining mist wisps. They slowly swirled past me and crept along the ground, leading me faster and faster away.

I followed it to a small clearing with ancient stones as tall as me surrounding it. I looked up close to one, touching it gingerly with my fingertips. It had tiny, intricate and detailed symbols carved into it, and artful depictions of a wolf, a fox, and an owl. The spirits, I realized. The animals were looking up at a larger carving that I recognized as a majestic lion with a huge and flowing mane. Its eyes had diamonds embedded to symbolize the glow.

Then I saw something in the center of the clearing. The mist that had led me was swirling around the large paws of a huge lion, only it was not a mist creature, but a real white lion with ghostly white eyes. I walked slowly towards it, and when I was close, I outreached a hand for the lion. My hand rested gently on its muzzle, then the lion seemed to smile warmly.

I sunk my arms into the silky richness of his mane in a hug. I'm glad I kept looking in this wood, I thought. But then I looked up to only see my bedroom ceiling. Had it all been a dream? I thought sadly. And the whole day I longed to go back to that forest, even if it was in my dream world.



The Gazes of Owls

Eden Beal

Grade 6

A Lesson About Beauty

Meagan Prouty

Grade 12

Everyone is special. There are no two people exactly the same, not even twins. There will always be some minuscule detail that **is different. Whether it's where their hair parts, how many freckles they have, the color of their hair, or the way they present themselves.** No two people are truly identical. We all have our oddities in this mysterious world we live in, from fears to the way someone walks or talks. Everyone is odd. As a society we should embrace our flaws and notice how truly beautiful every type of living being is. We should embrace our **beauty but, some don't. I know I sure don't; I have never felt beautiful.** I always feel hidden under how I appear to others. No one knows who I really am. Everyone I know claims that I am the most beautiful person they have ever met, but how do **people decide if someone is beautiful when they don't even know what the person looks like?**

My name is Maybelle Anne Ralph. I have grown up and lived in the same big city, Crooks Ville, my entire life. I have been attending Crooks Ville High School for three years now, and I am extremely popular for all the wrong reasons. Everyone loves me for my looks and not who I am. But, to be fair, no one knows who I am. Not even my family. They all know that I absolutely love to read, and that I have a passion for helping **those who can't help themselves, but no one knows what I**

really look like. My father thinks I have deep brown eyes, long blond wavy hair, a tiny hooked nose, and a small dusting of freckles across the bridge of my nose. My brother thinks I have shoulder length pale copper hair, piercing baby blue eyes, a bulbous nose, and no freckles. My mother thinks I have short and pin-straight mousy brown hair like herself, cobalt blue eyes, freckles everywhere, and a upturned nose. She is the closest to my actual appearance. I have long, pin-straight blond hair, crystal blue eyes, freckles absolutely everywhere, and a slightly upturned nose. the only thing about my appearance that never changes is my height and weight. I am always 5'4" and look to weigh about 110 pounds, no matter who sees me.

I've always known what I looked like, and I never thought anything of it. I truly thought I was the only person to truly know what I looked like. And for years I was right, until it all started to change.

The changes were subtle at first, so very subtle that I never noticed them. That was at least until there were too many to ignore. It started the day I met Claire. A girl who believed she was too skinny to ever be considered beautiful. She was convinced that no one would be able to love a bag of skin and bones like her. Then I told her extremely big or extremely small, **it's what's on the inside that counts.** The next day I realized my jeans were a little tighter, my thighs a little bigger.

The next change came the day I met Lily. She was terrified that she would never fit in, physically and metaphorically. She was taller than everyone else around us. She was so tall her ankles **couldn't be covered by her jeans.** She told me how she wished she could be as petite and tiny as me, but then I explained how the world has so many wonderful things to see, and she has the best view for her life because she gets to see life come barreling

at her. But so do I, just at another level, but that's okay. The next morning I realized my jeans were a little shorter than normal.

The changes weren't quite noticeable yet, but little did I know others would soon notice them, too.

The next change came after walking through a mall. I saw so many girls with so many different hair colors. Blondes, brunettes, red heads, colorful hair, black hair, and even white hair. I noticed them all and found the beauty in each. How everyone was complemented by their hair colors, it brought them to life. No two colors alike, but the confidence was all the same. That was the day I fell in love with every hair color, and soon after my own changed. My hair was no longer long and blonde, it was now crazy, curly red locks.

Weeks went by, and nothing else changed. My hair remained a deep red mess, I grew a little more everyday, I even gained some weight, but I was happy. I believed these few changes suited me, too bad no one else would ever see them.

Three months after the most recent, one of the final changes occurred. I was taking a walk one morning waiting for the sun to rise above the horizon. The sun coming up turned the world full of black and white and brought color and vibrance. The blue of the lake I was walking by reflected the yellows of the sun, the greens of the trees, and every other color you can see. It was beautiful, but then I saw the depth of my brown eyes. The hazel you can see if you look hard enough, the warm color of honey, and the dark shades of chestnuts. And I found beauty in that, too.

This day brought forth one of the biggest changes in my life. It changed my eyes. No longer were they a crystal clear blue. They

were now a mix of all of the colors. You could find shades of blue, brown, and, most dominantly, green. The combination was so **uniquely me, just as everyone else's.**

All together these changes were shocking at first. To look in the mirror and to see a new person would be odd for anyone, but **not everyone's appearance changes like mine does. The changes they make are intentional, have a purpose, thought behind them, but the cause of the changes in me was not known. I've always looked the same to myself. I've always thought I've seen my true self, but what if that isn't true?**

The biggest change of them all came the day after my eyes changed. People I see everyday, were coming up to me and **telling me the same things. Your eyes are so colorful, I've never noticed before. I didn't realize your hair was so red. Since when are you so tall? How have I never noticed this about you before?**

It was later that week I realized everyone was seeing me the way I see myself. And it took me even longer to realize that if these people are all seeing the same version of me, then this must be the true me.

I learned a lot over the course of all these changes. I learned beauty is everywhere and how to appreciate that beauty, but most importantly, I learned that beauty comes from being unique, from being confident within, and radiating that confidence outward. I learned I was hiding my beauty because **I thought it wasn't true, but in reality everyone is as beautiful in their own way as the person next to them. And I believe that is the most beautiful thing there is.**

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the writers, artists, and editors without whom this magazine would not be possible.

A special thank you to our senior editor Grace Williams, whose steadfast dedication to *Tornado Alley* for the past five years has been an incredible blessing. We wish you the best as you graduate high school and start your next chapter!

Thank you to the English and Art Departments at Dover High School and especially to Jen McKee for helping us spread the word about our project and encouraging students to submit work for publication.

Thank you to Dover City Schools for your continued partnership in the 21st Century Afterschool Learning Grant. We are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to encourage creativity and community partnership with our local teens.

Finally, thank *you* for reading! We hope you have enjoyed this year's edition and hope you continue to support the young artists and writers of Tuscarawas County and beyond!

See you in *Tornado Alley: Volume 9!*

Tornado Alley

Spring 2022

Featuring Art, Fiction, Nonfiction and Poetry
by Teens in grades 6-12.

From holiday memories and funny family stories to awesome art and emotional poetry, this edition of *Tornado Alley* delivers something for everyone!

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