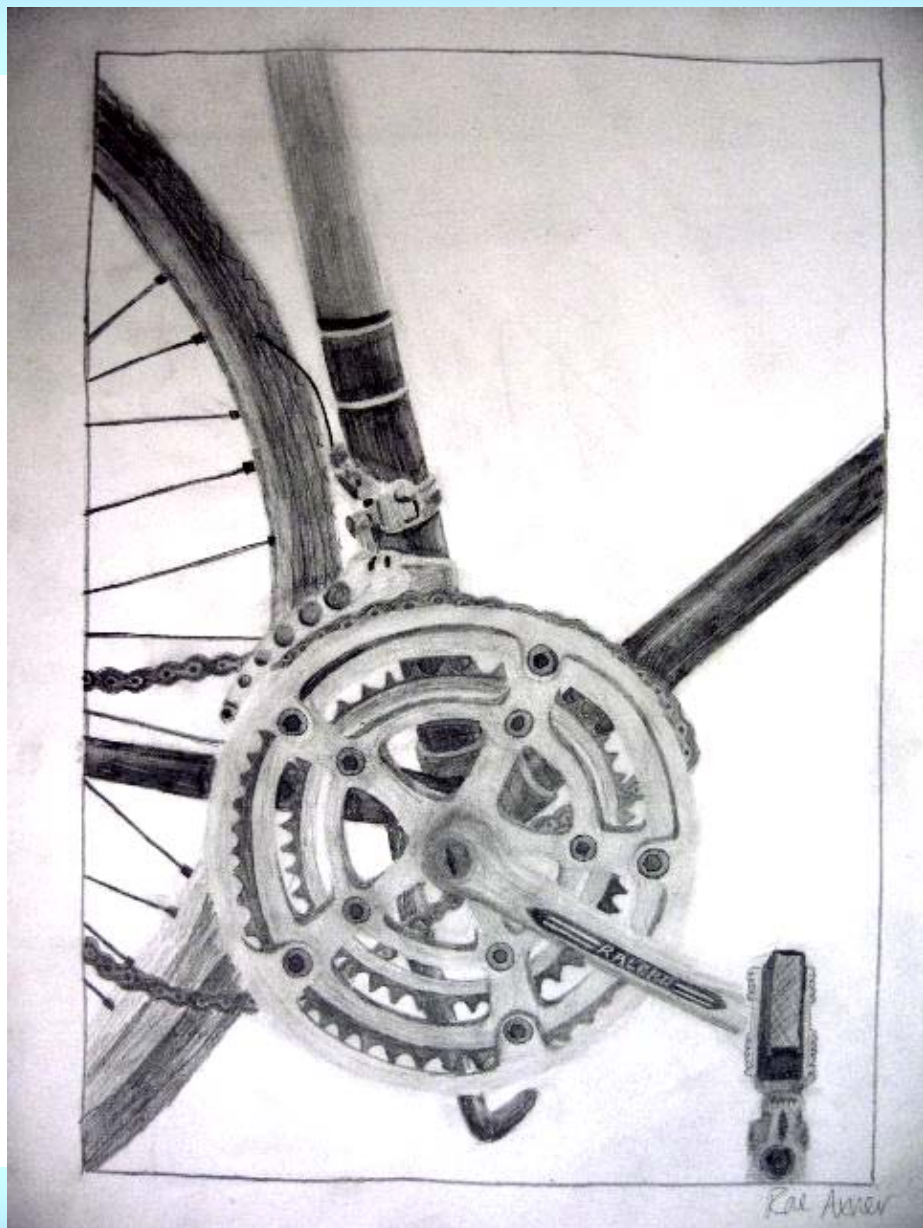


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**A new CYCLE**  
Double issue..vol. 3 numbers 1 & 2: 2010

# HAPPENING **Now!** EVERYWHERE

Vol. 3 numbers 1 & 2: 2010

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## THE YEAR THAT WAS

BY GABI MATHEWS

I remember last year, when the elections hadn't even happened yet. We were starting a new social studies unit, about the elections and the candidates and presidency. Our first assignment was to bring in a list of candidates. I went online and found Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, John McCain, Mitt Romney, John Edwards, Mike Huckabee, and Rudy Giuliani. I sat down on my inviting sofa to read about their political views and what they wanted to do for the U.S. I immediately loved Obama's view, especially about what he wanted to do for education and about the Iraq war. Hillary Clinton was interesting, but I'd have to say what she thought about health care was probably what intrigued me the most. I mused over the Republicans, then decided I was most definitely for Democrats only. I wanted the Iraq war to end, and I was displeased that John McCain wanted to continue it. As I lay on that comfortable couch, I thought about what I had read. I didn't know much politics and a lot of what they said confused me, but I still thought about it. As the year progressed, everyone was talk-

ing about politics. Marisa, my friend, was all for John Edwards. Some of my other friends wanted Obama, while others expressed Hillary Clinton someone they would want to vote for. The next school year everything was moving faster. Several people had dropped out (Mitt Romney, for one) and suddenly presidential debates were happening, and I had assignments on them.

Barack Obama talked about schools, Sarah Palin talked about a bridge to nowhere, the Sarah Palin Rap was performed during a Saturday Night Live episode, and everyone had it stuck in their heads. Sarah Palin was the best thing to dress-up as for Halloween. We had a school election and not surprisingly, the vote went in favor of the Democratic candidate (the final score was something like Obama 444, McCain 16) because Massachusetts is a Democratic state. Everyone was pumped up for election day. I stayed over at a friend's house due to a school project, and we stayed up past 10pm to watch the votes come in. When we went to sleep, minds peaceful knowing that Obama was in the lead, I swear that it was near 11. The next morning we screamed for joy upon learning that Barack would become the first African-American president of the U.S. We were also pleased to know that he had won both the popular and electoral votes. And

then today, on this historic January 20th, 2009, Barack H. Obama officially became our nation's President. My class and the one next door watched his inauguration proudly, listened to his speech, and stood up when he said to. I don't know about others, but today, my heart was touched. I am full of pride to announce that our President, our leader, the person who will be in office for the next four years, who will straighten out the messes that have been made, is going to be great for the job.

I just know it. In a year from now, our situation will be better than in 2008. Our nation will be stronger, closer, and people will once again believe in the United States of America. Believe in this, trust this, and your hope will keep us alive.

**Yes We Did!**

**By Katie Massie**

On the plane from Boston to Washington, I saw a couple of people with bags with pictures of the Obama family, and lots of hats that said Barack Obama, 44th president. I had a lot of fun the whole trip reading people's different pins and stickers that said funny things.

I sat down next to two men. The one on my right was fiddling with his Blackberry the whole time,

and the other was very kind and answered all my questions. He handed me the things I needed and helped me find the menu for drinks. These were the first of many signs of kindness I saw throughout this trip.

☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺

When we were off the plane, and in the Washington Dulles airport, I noticed more and more people had pins, hats, tote bags, sweatshirts, and stickers that had something to do with the Obama family. But it was when we passed the newsstand when I really stared at the "inauguration spirit." Every magazine had a photograph of Mr. Obama, that is, every magazine except a women's magazine which had a big picture of Michelle on the front. But the adult Obamas were not the only ones who were getting the fame. Malia and Sasha Obama had their faces on several of the family magazines, posing cheerfully with their parents.

I looked at it with wonder, thinking of the day I would tell my grandchildren of this. As I turned back to my parents, I saw my dad buy a box of Milk Duds, and in return he received not only a box of Milk Duds, but an Obama pin as well because the lady behind the counter had seen his Obama hat and had liked it. My mom pointed to the balloons. I twisted back and

gazed with my jaw dropped, at all the inauguration balloons. There had to have been about a hundred. But that was not all. There were sweatshirts, t-shirts, hats, stickers, and on every one of them somewhere it said Obama. Soon he would be President Obama.

It didn't take very long to get to my dad's friend's house, and I was surprised at how little the traffic was. I thought that everything was going to be jammed up. Little did I know, a lot of crowds were coming my way.

I knew that it was a very important event. I knew that I would not be able to repeat this day. I knew that it was a very important inauguration. But when it was 6:30 in the morning, and I had very warm blankets wrapped around me, all I was thinking of was how the air outside of my bed was several degrees lower than the temperature my blankets were making me. My mom, little do I want to admit it, had to almost wrestle me out of bed. I tiredly gave in, and my important day began.

**Morning** – I dressed as fast as I could, because I was very cold. A tickle in my throat sprang up as we pulled the door shut, and did not go away until the end of the day, and it then jumped again, the next morning. I coughed the whole taxi ride to the Metro station, and

through the crowds of people on the train. We saw newspaper after newspaper, sweatshirt after sweatshirt, and pin after pin. As we got closer to the Capitol, the anticipation was obviously building. There was no space to move, but people were helping each other the whole time.

**Late Morning** – Since we were stuck in place, a couple people said hi.

"Hello! I'm from Denver!"

"Hey, we're from NY State."

"I'm from California."

"I'm from Massachusetts," I piped up. Everyone asked each other's names. Then my mom realized, with a groan, that she had left our lunches on the kitchen counter.

She asked for some food. People gave up energy bars, and every bite made my stomach more full, and made me happier. One lady fainted and everyone quickly started yelling for a doctor.

**Around Noon** – As we came to the Capitol, my parents became more daring. Instead of staying behind the Reflecting Pool, we moved up in front of it and had a much closer view. My dad moved a little bit to the center, to get good pictures, and my mom and I stayed near a screen and through the trees we had a clear view. We could hear the swearing-in clearly. But I

couldn't hear his speech very well. The mass of people stretched farther than the eye could see. And it took longer for the speech to reach the people farther down, so we could hear a ringing echo of victory.

But President Obama wasn't the only one getting all the attention. Our former President was getting a lot of attention too. But he got a whole different kind of attention. When people saw even a glimpse of him, millions and millions of people were suddenly booing the man who led our country into a lot of screw-ups. But the time he got the most attention was when he was leaving in his helicopter. I don't know who started it, I don't know how it happened, but all of a sudden, I found myself and countless others singing as our former President left. But not just any normal song.

"Na na na na, na na na na, hey hey hey, good bye!!!" Everyone was so joyful.

**Afternoon** – Numbly my parents and I stumbled through the streets. We were very cold, very tired, but in our minds we had a good thought that kept us going. Barack Obama is the President. Barack Obama is the President. As we passed huge lines for small cafés, we hoped we would be able to find somewhere to stop. Luckily, my dad's friend invited us to his office. We stopped and had hot cocoa, and muffins, and I can't tell you how good it felt to get out of the cold and to get food. I sat, all warm, in a new Inauguration sweatshirt. We still had a long way to go, but we had good thoughts



and good people in the White House.

# Mine

Joseph P. Scannell

When I first got my Macbook, I hated it. The only thing on the plus side was that it was mine. I'm not a selfish person, so I don't know why simple ownership of something is such a big deal to me. Maybe it comes from growing up in a family of seven and rarely having sole possessions. Maybe it comes from my overall lack of privacy as a child. Maybe it comes from all the forced sharing—or maybe all these things. There are few things in this world that I can truly call “mine.” My room, my car, my computer. Oddly enough, none of these things are actually mine. Everything in my house belongs to the family. Of course there are primary and exclusive users, so I'm pretty sure that my Father-At-Law only added the family clause as a legal precedent in case he ever needed to revoke privileges.

When I was young, hand-me-downs didn't just apply to clothing in my family. My room wasn't mine until I was sixteen and, by default, the oldest. Same with the car. I got all of my sister's things only after she was done with or had outgrown them. I drive a Chevy Aveo plastered in Marine Corps stickers to compensate for the Barbie horn and overall lack of masculinity

encompassed by the egg-on-wheels. I sleep in a powder blue room with sparkles on the ceiling that I cannot paint over because in less than a year the room will be passed down to another sister. I grew up using a rain-cloud-colored Gateway computer with pink and blue stickers all over the side because my sister thought it was cute. I spent more time peeling off stickers and consequently getting yelled at than I did actually using the computer.

When I was young, we would rotate computer usage every half-hour. I would get home from school at two-thirty and use the computer until three o'clock, then my sister would have it until five. I wasn't very good at telling time. As I got older, I did eventually catch on and started fighting back. Just before my time was up I would write simple pieces of code that would mess with my sister during her time. Many fights ensued regarding the validity of each other's computer usage. I was learning hexadecimal coding, C++, and HTML. She was learning 2 LOL @ her BFFL <3. This continued for a few years until my sister (of course) got her own laptop for Christmas. I was stuck with the old one for a few more years, and while I didn't have to share it, it still didn't feel like it was mine.

Then I got it.

It was the third gift I opened on Christmas morning. I wasn't exactly surprised because the two preceding ones had been an Apple Mighty Mouse and a box of Apple Insurance. At first, I flashed my well-rehearsed OMG-this-is-THE-best-present-EVER smile because I had asked for a Playstation 3 and I didn't particularly want a Macbook. Having been a Windows-user my entire life, it was like slapping me across the face—with a Macbook. What followed, however, were days laced with discovery, sprinkled with love, and full of bliss. It was perfect. If there were laptops back when Goldilocks was arbitrarily breaking into houses in the forest, I have no doubt in my mind that she would have eaten, sat on, and slept with my Macbook. It was just right. It was black (my favorite color), but more importantly: it was mine. I very rarely go anywhere without my Macbook and if I'm not using it, I know where it is. Always.

If it's not in my hands, it definitely won't be in yours. I don't know why though. It's not so much that I'm embarrassed or ashamed of its contents. I'm scared of the harm that might come to it if I am not in constant control. I'm not going to lie, I don't trust you.

Okay, maybe I'm a little embarrassed. I am a pack rat and that is exemplified by a 160-

gigabyte hard drive filled to 85% of its capacity. I cannot remember ever deleting a file.

Or maybe I'm scared of what you'll think. I have hundreds of papers, projects, Photoshops, cards, poems, stories, videos, pictures, and movies saved on my hard drive. Each one providing a window into my soul and allowing you an unobstructed view of different aspects of my life and that scares me.

Maybe it's my innate lust for control that drives my fear of allowing you an honest look into my world. Maybe it's my chronic insecurity as a person. Maybe it's my unquenchable desire for acceptance.

Maybe it's all of these things.

It is.

My laptop contains snapshots of my life and personality. It has managed to capture who I truly am as a person. It's more than just a motherboard, video card, and some plastic. It's a scrapbook of my life—filled to the brim with stories, memories, and experiences. By allowing you to look through my scrapbook, I am afraid that you'll see the real me, instead of the carefully calculated personality I present to you every day. What am I really afraid of?

I'm afraid that you won't like my scrapbook.

# RECYCLATHON

by Marisa Rafal

You know how when you feel really passionately about something you work to make it even better? Well I think that is the feeling that created the recyclathon: Passion. Passion for the newspaper. It is a lot of work and without the passion it might not happen. It is the passion that drives you to handout all those flyers, do all that baking, gather all the supplies and tables and so on. It is a lot of work to plan and advertise such a big event but because of the passion it gets done. This year we made approximately \$375.

This year the newspaper felt generous, so after a day of sitting in the hot sun, making bargains, we decided to share the profits. The newspaper loves to work with Mr. Michel and the kids in Haiti, so we decided to give \$225 to children in Haiti



through three teachers, Ms. Theolien, Mr. Jacques, and of course Mr. Michel. That is yet another thing that involves passion: helping others. So as you can see the newspaper is filled with passionate people who wish to strengthen the communities around them through news and literacy.

Now we will also be able to spread news by taking more pictures for with some of the money left over we bought a camera and then we also paid the fee so we could participate in the Somerville art festival, ArtBeat. So, you can begin to see how all these things are related and build on one another.

\* \* \*

Okay, I guess I should fill some of you in on the Recyclathon. It is this big event that happens at the school every year. We take donations of clothes, toys, books, and even culinary tools that are still in good condition, and sell them at really good prices to other people. So I guess it is more re-using than anything but I think "Recyclathon" has a better ring to it.

A huge percentage of the things that we gather are practically given to other people. So instead of filling up landfills and polluting, the

stuff is reincarnated and continues doing good in the world. Which also reduces the amount of new stuff that has to be made. As you can see, it does a whole range of environmentally friendly stuff as it separately promotes the safety of our earth. But there is still more, it also raises funds for our publishing company. We usually spend the money we receive paying off debts, purchasing new printers or cameras, and sometimes it pays our way into art fairs.

On top of all of that, we also give a little away to a charitable cause. Often a little of the money goes to helping children in Haiti and getting them the supplies they need to lead a happier childhood and hopefully by doing that we are thoroughly enriching their lives. In my opinion the recyclathon is an all around GREAT event that does a ton of good in our community and beyond.

But it is also a ton of work and can be extremely stressful. We have to organize, advertise, clean, gather, bargain, count, set up, and so on. It is a long day of standing and running around in the hot sun working, trying to please, and so on....

People say it is like a giant, fundraising yard sale, but in a way it is also a giant community gathering. So I am really

glad that our pre-adult publishing company does it.



### **Eliza Forrest reports:**

During the recyclathon I did two things. For 2/3rds I managed the food table. I sold drinks and cookies to people at the recyclathon. The other 1/3rd of the time I was there I laid out stuff that was for sale and sold people stuff. I couldn't stay for the whole time but for the time I was there I had a lot of fun.

### **Jeremy Nelson reports:**

The recyclathon was a great success and we had lots of fun.

At first I could not settle in at any one station and was starting to wander around when Ethan had an amazing idea to start a soccer game so people would get thirsty and buy drinks. We would go and play soccer for a while and then we would stop and people would be tired so they would get water and play more. This worked for

a long time but then all the kids had to go, so we were really bummed until we found out how successful we had been. It turns out we were quite helpful and would do it again next year.

Then I went over and helped with my game that Maya had been running the whole time for me.

## The Can Toss

by Maya Lubeck-Schricker

At the recyclathon I was in charge of the can toss. The can toss was a game where you would pay 5 cents for every throw and the person would try to get the can into a recycling bin. If you got the can in the bin you would win  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a happening buck. The happening bucks were used so that you could buy something for free. But if you have  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a happening buck you would get something  $\frac{1}{2}$  off.

Anyways the person would try to get a can in a recycling bin that would be raised to different heights. My job was to give the person the cans to throw into the bins. It was also my job to make the game challenging and fun. My job was done well by me. I got a whole bunch of people to come back again, and

again, and again! Eventually I had to tell people to stop coming so that other people could get a chance to try also. I think that I was very successful.

Eventually the game got kind of boring. People also got bored so they stopped paying. So I brought over some teddy bears from the yard sale part of the recyclathon. I made the bins at really tall heights so that it would be hard to get cans in the bin. The new game was that you



would pay 10 cents for 3 cans to throw. You would have to get 1 can in each bin. (There were three bins.) If you got 1 can in each bin you could win your choice of a teddy bear. But since 1 bin was really high and there was a strong wind against the way that the cans were thrown, hardly anyone got a teddy bear.

We kept the game like that for the rest of the day considering that we made a lot of money from it. But then people found



out about the deal that if you recycled the can to the game you could use that can for a free throw. So because of that deal a lot of people got free throws.

But in the end we made lots of money, we got people occupied and the people who paid won some nice prizes. To me, telling how many times people came back I think that everyone had fun!

\*\*\*

Writing coach, mule and printer, Alan, one of the recyclathon helpers, filed this report.

"After it was all over, after all the teens and kids and 10agers cleaned up and the

community was invited to take for free from the leftovers, and Anthony and Reginald folded all the tables and took them all away and the writers and friends forgot about the day until it would be reported in the school paper, I presented the teachers with their \$75 each on the last day of school.

"The teachers were thrilled to get the newspaper's donation to support their work with the schools they help in Haiti. I think Ms. Theolien and Mr. Jacques had forgotten that you writers had promised at the beginning to share your profits to help their students in Haiti. They seemed pleasantly surprised and the three were touched by your generous gift. Ms. Theolien gave me a hug. Mr. Jacques and Mr. Michel vigor-



ously shook my hand. I share these with you. Anthony was in Mr. Jacques's room when I presented your donation and Anthony asked, 'Where's mine?' I shook his hand and wished him a good summer."

Mr. Michel sorted through the clothing donations for the things that would be useful for the children in Haiti and selected 2 boxes that he can carry with him on his next trip there.

Mr. Michel declined the pretty bathing suits that no one was buying and we found out that poor people in Haiti don't go to the beach because they live too far from the shore and don't have a way to get there or money to spend on it. Even though Haiti is an island with beautiful beaches.

\*\*\*

Aleph, a 4<sup>th</sup> grader, lost a find but gained a story that sums up the craze of recyclathon.



## Watch your stuff at yard sales by Aleph Mills

At the recyclathon my little brother `Aedàn had asked me to buy him a big fire truck because he was going to stay home. I saw a giant fire truck on one of the tables and I bought it and put it next to my backpack. Then I went and bought more stuff. When I came back I put a pot I had bought on top of my fire truck and went and bought more stuff. When I came back the pot was on a clothes table and I couldn't find the fire truck. I put the pot back with my backpack and found some grownups who were helping at the recyclathon and told them about the fire truck. They said they thought it was still on sale and someone else had bought it. I told them how `Aedàn had

wanted a fire truck. They helped me find a monster truck and gave it to me for free because of the fire truck. `Aedàn loved the monster truck.

*THE END*

## Accidental Glance

Brendan Takash

I swear I wasn't staring – there was  
something out the window  
that caught my eye.

But then you looked over and  
we saw each other and  
I looked away and  
I thought you'd the same but  
when I took another glance  
you were still staring.  
You were probably taking the same glance I took  
and I swear it was an accident,  
this stuff just happens.  
So I'm sorry for staring  
(unless you wanted me to stare  
because you look very nice but  
not in a creepy way).  
I mean, that bird out the window was cool and  
it was the reddest cardinal I had ever seen and  
the light just kinda bounced off its wings and  
landed on you.

I guess what I'm trying to say is  
you look nice in the light and  
I guess I'll return to my book.

## Fluctuations

Danielle Vitalo

Laying on the back of the neon green Malibu, she was level with the water, and the sun was shining in such a way that it cascaded over each wave and highlighted the blue undertones that normally went unseen. The river was a dirty symphony, clouded with pollen, and those annoying little puffy white balls that twirled about in the air. They stuck to the water, and almost looked like gigantic snowflakes that were indifferent to the sunshine. The green grass that surrounded the water was shaded by tall trees, their leaves overstretched, their bodies leaning towards the water, yearning for taste. Near the shore, the water lay as flat as glass, and the reflection of the trees was painted on the surface, symmetrical like a butterfly's wings. She didn't have sunscreen on, and although she could feel the slight burning of her skin, she wouldn't move. It was beautiful. It was real. Strands of hair swayed in the wind, and the hand that lay on top of the water was delicately pushed by each single wave. A shadow cast over her face, she heard movement behind her. She began to lift her head and turn to face them, but it was too late. Her hands and ankles were captured, her body became a pendulum, and on the count of three she was flung. The combination of screeches and shrieks and laughter echoed as she took one last breath and fell into the water, the mirrored images she admired bent and forgotten, the ripple of her own splash interfering with the patterned waves passing by.

## Watercolor

Danielle Vitalo

Crackling thunder filled the sky, and streaks of lightning shown through the dark clouds. Raindrops swallowed her as her clothes stuck to her skin, bloated and thick like pancakes. The world in front of her was a picture, painted with intricate watercolors that fell into one another. Her life was a canvas, stretched tight and layered with gloss, ready to be used. It had borne a picture before, one forgotten and erased, desperately hidden underneath the white paint that sat on top. She could see what was left over from before. Spots of black that hadn't been fully covered up, part of a face that was unrecognizable. She picked up the paintbrush and dipped it in bright blue. The blue was her favorite, like that of the ocean and tossed waves. As she delicately pressed it on her canvas, the rain carried the color down and created a pool at one corner. Intoxicated by the dirty canvas, the color turned a deep black. It was hard to tell whether her face was wet from the rain, or her own silent tears.

## Glass

Danielle Vitalo

She leaned in closer and brought her hand to her face, brushing away the bangs that fell across her forehead and hid her eyes. They were a deep brown, shimmering around the edges and indefinitely dark in the middle. The abyss that she stared into was her own, yet she couldn't be sure. Touching the cold glass, she pointed to her nose, her cheeks, her chin, and outlined her defined features. Going back and doing the same to her own face, she couldn't help but think how invariably different they were. It's just a piece of glass, she thought. Why should it matter so much? She touched the contour of her cheekbones and slid her hand down to her shoulders. The smooth glide was so much more than what she saw in the mirror. The three dimensional person she could see and feel for herself could, in no way, be captured by this reflective surface. She cupped her cheeks then covered her ears, her fingers running along her jaw line. Her hands left her face, and she stared down at her fingers and wrists, seeing the outline of the bones. She became mesmerized by the pulling tendons, the tension in each movement, the interactions that made her such a unique human being. She decided that she was worth it. That she was capable, that she was fascinating, that she was important. She was worth it. She decided that this mirror, this piece of useless glass, could easily be replaced. It was nothing more than a square of material purchased at a department store, shipped in bulk, and marked at a low price. All it did was reflect light, simple physics. It shouldn't matter so much. It shouldn't make a difference. She flipped the switch and left the room, the mirror with no light to reflect, and no image to produce.



# Behind the fiction story:

An interview with the author

by Tayla Plett

Several months ago, a friend of mine told me about a short story he'd written based on the lifestyles of children he witnessed during his stay in Africa. Elias took this trip in 2008, and told me a lot about his experience there when he returned but when he shared his written story with me more recently, it became clear that there was a lot more to his experience than what he'd told me. After reading his story and passing it along to a few other friends, I suggested that he should submit it to *Happening now! everywhere* and sure enough the editors agreed that there was something great on our hands. After a little taste of his story, I had so many questions and I was asked by the magazine to construct some kind of interview about his trip and more specifically talk about the real life connections he made in his story. From the interview and much discussion, here's a glimpse of my friend's journey.

**In April 2008**, Elias Estabrook's uncle suggested a family trip to Niger. After consideration and some cultural research, the Estabrooks decided to go, preparing by getting visas and getting the necessary shots that enabled them to travel. Some research for example was that before their arrival, they found that men in the Muslim culture in that city traditionally wear formal shirts and long pants that are lightweight and concealing.

*"I took it upon myself to learn as much as I could, I went with a mission, not just as a tourist."*

Elias was aware of the dangers that may have come without knowing enough about the culture he entered. Elias explained his uncle was familiar with the city and had prior knowledge about where they were going to visit. Perhaps most importantly, his uncle had already established a strong friendship with the man they would come to trust as their guide.

**What were your thoughts before you went? Were you nervous to go?**

*"I don't think I was nervous, just excited...anxious. Too big to think about at that point the idea of going to a whole other place was too big. I didn't realize how significant it was until later. I took the flight there by myself to Paris, which was my first time flying alone. I think that was good for me; I was proud to have the responsibility to do it for myself to and be an adult. It helped me to feel like an equal to my uncle and his two coworkers, we really became a group."*

On arrival, the family stayed in a 4 star hotel which, Elias suggested, was the nicest in the entire country. The streets around the hotel weren't lined with street lights and there were restaurants with cultural food they walked to. They drank only bottled water during their trip (and a lot of it) because their bodies wouldn't have been able to cope with a drastic change in the water.

**What did you notice about society in Torodi?**

THE KIDS

*"When I came out of the airport kids grabbed the bags, I*

*wasn't sure how to react, when you arrive at first, those first few moments you have to adapt your brain."*

He followed his uncle's example and let go of his bags and found out the kids were looking to bring their bags to the car to make money. Elias handed them two euros and didn't realize it was a lot of money and after that got better at giving the children tips. Though he got better at leaving the kids tips sometimes, he found, there were too many kids at once and they fought each other to receive change.

*"Little kids have a bowl around their necks to collect change."* He was at a gas station and a child on the street came up to his window and asked for money; when he gave him some money, he told his friends and they swarmed the car which wasn't ideal for him but it's what the kids do to survive. Other than currency, the children accept any food someone gives them. When language creates a barrier for these kids in begging for food and money, they make gestures to ask.

*"The commercials are nothing like standing face to face with*

*the children of Africa, they go through so much, they're impressive. Compared to how people complain about school, I observed kids lucky to go to school. In the rural areas, kids don't go to school."*

While on his trip Elias saw suburban and urban kids, kids with and without families, and learned to appreciate the education he'd been given. An abandoned building he saw was a vacant school. *"The teacher didn't have the means to come back to educate the kids. Kids were deprived of services and medical care and education... they live so far away."*

### **Which kid or kids specifically made an impact on you?**

*"A kid who made an impact... he was around my age at the time, maybe only thirteen, he knew a little English, he said what's up and gave me a high five. His friend was crippled with one leg, said what's up."* Hearing a little English from the kids was a small connection back to his own American culture. The crippled boy's cultural background was Djerma and he spoke in a tribal dialect which was a variation of French, all

together they shared some good laughs. Behind the laughs or maybe later on in his reflections of the day, Elias disclosed that he ultimately felt bad for the kids he saw, supposing they weren't going much of anywhere without many opportunities and that many of them lived parentless and looked out for themselves.

*"The kids who asked about me were the kids in the rural areas, I still know them by their face. I saw them every day and played soccer, they impressed me and I could tell them in a crowd."*

### **How do rural and urban kids differ?**

*"The city kids didn't have family, the rural did. The thing they have in common is poverty. Rural parents have an overwhelming amount of kids."* He found the parents wear nicer clothes and that tribes and traditions correlate with what people choose to wear, depending also on what you can afford. Some of the kids had markings on their heads that connect them to their tribes and as they mature, the kids receive more markings. One example of a marking is a neat salamander shape

which like other symbols helps a person to connect back to their roots. Most of the kids wear donated tees and shorts from just about everywhere. Elias brought extra clothes to donate in a more direct way. Many rurally located families shared resources with wild animals also living on the reserve. It's not uncommon to encounter giraffes or camels, donkeys, sheep. Who could have known that your donated clothes would some day encounter an African safari animal up-close?

#### THE COMMUNITY

*"I had to catch on to society, had to learn how to greet people and go on the fly."*

Torodi had an enormous amount of people at the market but rural people are self sufficient and don't usually produce more than they'd need for themselves.

*"I felt almost like a celebrity the way people were crowded around us and looking at us, all you can do is smile, for many it was the first time they'd seen a white person, or three."* Kids that saw the family pass in the car were fascinated, and they ran after the car and shadowed

behind them in the market. *"I was humbled, all eyes were on me, we were the spotlight and I knew this was one of the few places this would happen. The only other western people were doctors and a few vacationers with young kids, no one my age."*

He had time to reflect about each experience in the hotel, and meaning behind the things he observed. He got to know the call to prayer to Mecca when the Muslim people around would take breaks from work, immediately dropping what they were doing to pray in an eastern direction five times every day. He noticed workers would go during their breaks to pray on the side of the road.

*"Drop everything, set out rugs and pray. It's a whole different society."*

#### THE LANDSCAPE

Right when you get out of the capital city, you can see there's a European built and funded highway and on either side are shacks put together made of mud and straw. There's no plumbing inside the shacks and every once in a while along the roads is a designated

mosque, the nicest and most important buildings built with the most care.

If you spend some time in that culture, especially in the market, you'll soon see the importance of the donkey. They're extremely common for transportation along with old, worn imported cars. The domestic donkeys naturally have a noticeable brown marking on their upper back and shoulders, much like the sign of the cross. People relate to it as a holy animal because of the belief in religious text that tells the story of Jesus arriving on a donkey's back in Jerusalem.

## SOCIAL CLASS

The members of the Ministry of Mines are few and a wealthy, powerful group who live life in the best real-estate. They even have green grass on their property just because they have power over natural resources. In that society the rich stay rich. They like to be and have to be separate from the lower class.

Classes of people are separated by physical walls and guards between homes, some guards are armed with guns. *"The military is very present; they shut down the*

*street with their military when the president, surrounded by other cars and guns, passed our hotel."*

Africa is no exception to the trend in which the rich are educated, have nicer homes and clothes and their kids enjoy privileges.

Let's talk about the connections to the short story. **Where did the story come from?**

*"I was involved in the issues in Darfur and I was trying to get people to support aid and to be aware of what was going on. After I had seen it all in front of my face, looking into the eyes of an African child was an indescribably haunting and moving thing, I didn't know all of their stories but you know their lives aren't great, you can't image what's happened to them and Americans can't imagine what it's like to live a life without the things we expect and what we take for granted including basic luxuries and freedom."*

After being a part of this experience, to compensate for what he wished he could do for the kids, he wanted to be more involved in Darfur. To address his feeling and passion about what and how he

felt about the things he observed, he wanted to write a realistic story about life in Niger. He wanted to look through the eyes of someone living that life. It was important to him that his point of view wouldn't be that of an outsider so he didn't connect the story to himself. He knew he wanted to capture the general feeling of the life of a homeless child, the background of his life were things that really happened to kids living there. "It was hard," Elias says, to think of something simple that would give it a theme, focusing on the main character in a personal level, it was hard to put the point of view as one of the kids. The name of the story is "Praised" because that's the Arabic translation of the name of the main character who displays honorable characteristics.

**How did this experience change you?** "I thought

*about how the people who are suffering were only a few thousand miles away, living in the same type of environment. It just struck me that even if I couldn't directly help the kids in Niger other than giving them money and food, I decided I wanted to help on a bigger scale. What would be more productive would be to provide aid. Now that I had seen this part, I could imagine the horrors of genocide somewhere near sweeping through."*

Out of everything he saw and experienced, Elias stressed that the kids and the poverty struck him the most out of any other single thing he saw in Africa. Elias is currently keeping in touch with Darfur incidents and news. To find out more, to learn about what you can do to be involved, to provide aid and spread awareness, visit <http://savedarfur.org/>

## New cycle

## an editorial

This double issue, with its designation as a new volume (vol. 3), is published in anticipation of a format change that corresponds with the progress we have achieved in defining our goals, audience reach, and print/electronic balance.

With the establishment of *12!* and *Snowflake!* spin-off magazines for younger readers, Happeningnow!everywhere can focus on the needs of a more general readership. Also, in a marketing trial, we will publish shorter issues, more frequently, at a much lower price. Find a full description on our e-supplement, [www.happeningnoweverywhere.com](http://www.happeningnoweverywhere.com).

# Praised

by Elias Estabrook

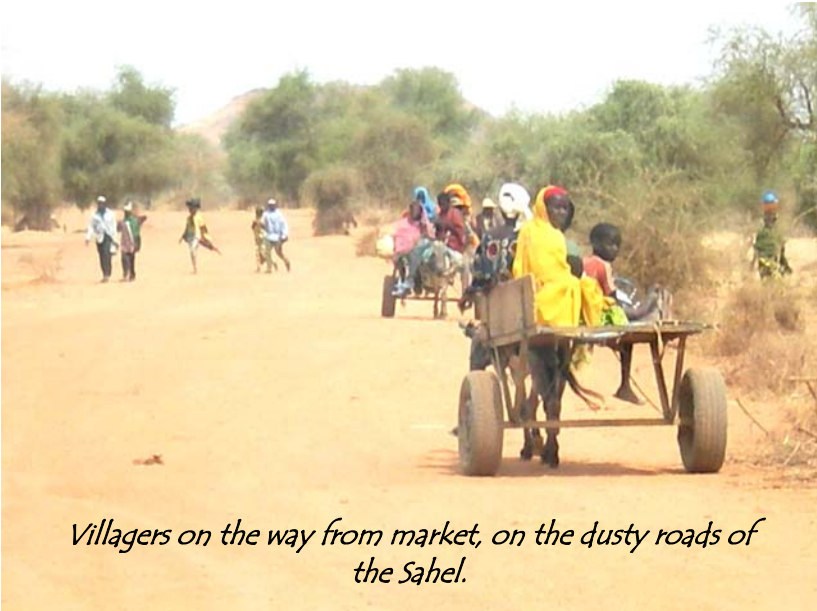
**Walking along** the orange, dusty streets of Niamey, Amadou somehow felt at ease. The glow of the horizon as the flaming African sun gradually climbed into the sky met his eyes this morning, and every morning, when he woke and made his way through the city. With the call to prayer sounding the beginning to the day, he would get up at dawn and perform his normal ritual. Though Amadou was not a man yet, he prayed often throughout the day, along with the thousands of other Nigerois. He felt strength with this responsibility, and of course through his prayers he hoped for the better.

In this way, most days were the same routine for Amadou. Always searching for some way to make

money or maybe receiving a piece of food from a stranger. Always wondering in the evenings where he would spend the night, and always dreaming of a chance at prosperity in the future. He did not know how prosperity felt. He didn't even fully comprehend happiness.

Most of all though, he always wondered about his past and the family that had been torn away from him. He'd hardly known his father or his mother. They'd both died from sicknesses Amadou hadn't understood when he was a small child. All that was still left of them was the warmth of his mother's voice in his heart and the stern look of his father engraved in his mind.

He hadn't heard of any living brothers and sisters, and there had been no family members there to take him in. And so, from an early age he'd come to cope with survival on



*Villagers on the way from market, on the dusty roads of the Sahel.*

the streets and the longing for the comfort of family. Though Amadou was not alone in the markets and alleys, inside he felt very lonely. He battled these emotions though, and carried himself with confidence, because he always believed that was what his parents would have wanted him to do.

Other than his family's legacy and dreams, Amadou carried high expectations for himself, but nothing much else. He owned only two torn, stained t-shirts, a pair of dirty blue shorts, and two worn-down leather sandals. What he carried, he valued heavily, and anything else that he could find he protected with his life.

Indeed, it was a battle every day. Among the thousands of other children roaming the busy marketplaces, the overflowing slums, and the crowded side streets, Amadou competed for odd jobs and any chance at receiving a coin or piece of food. Real work was hard to find for a boy like him, but anywhere Amadou could earn a penny for lending a hand would do. Along with the unemployment came the danger of the streets. Amadou made it sure to avoid the wrong corners and the wrong people, maybe looking to steal from or hurt him and the other homeless children.

And when there wasn't work to do or places to go to, Amadou sat or stood around, not sure if things would ever turn out better. He could not go to school and he did not have the connections to get a job. Even though it may have been frustrating, he did not know anything else other

than this life he struggled through everyday.

On this specific day, Amadou had risen very early, awoken by a powerful dream filled with flashbacks to the sweet songs of his mother and the penetrating eyes of his wise father as he taught him lessons from the Qur'an. He'd wiped away the forming tears, quickly shaking the thoughts from his mind and heading off from the sheltered store side where he'd slept that night.

Now he was striding down the sandy sidewalks of the bustling and dangerous place he called home. Motorcycles whizzing by, cars honking and pushing through the throngs of men and women on foot, and children wandering about kicking rocks and picking through trash. Open shops made of clay lined the streets and stands brimming with grains, meats, and varying fruits filled the popular plazas.

Just like every other day, Amadou went to the usual spots where work, in the form of carrying goods or loading carts and cars, was sometimes available. He hung out in the shade of some trees reaching over the yard of a walled government compound. And when the other boys found a ball they could play with, Amadou demonstrated the natural skill and speed he had, magically directing the football around. He fit in with the now smiling crowd of joking boys, but like the rest of them he would also have to fight for the limited opportunities and success in this country in all seriousness. And so as another day came to an end, the children moved their

separate ways.

Amadou, spreading out across the city with the thousands of other boys and girls of all ages, turned a corner into the waning light of a side street, deep in thought. He didn't know exactly where he was going, but it really didn't matter to him now. With the fun he'd had this afternoon had come a longing for someone who could always sweep such a smile into his face. The streets had toughened him, but there was still a hole in his heart where the care of a mother or brother was missing, where the support of a companion would have fit in.

Spotting a good place to lie for the night under the shelter of a leaning section of tin roof, the boy sighed and stretched out his aching legs. Hunger stung his stomach, but battling the pain Amadou stood and began his routine evening prayer.

He spoke the phrases clearly, conjuring strength and asking in his mind for the guidance of Allah. In this Isha he submitted to the power of Allah. Amadou hoped and hoped as he knelt and bowed, for just a small chance at being a person in society. He desired a chance at life even though it seemed to have been stolen from him the moment he was abandoned and had to fend for himself.

With these troubles nagging him, but the might of his soul keeping him confident, Amadou lay down under the starry heavens and rested. He listened to the hum of the bugs, felt the warmth of the thick, blanketing evening air, and drew from the smell of cooking food a certain comfort. Slowly his eyes slipped closed and his

body relaxed, because he deep down knew by the will of God, his parents, and his own heart that he would make it through.

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With a dark sky, illuminated by stars, still reigning over the city, Amadou suddenly awoke. A nightmare had driven him to open his eyes in shock. Not only this, nearby muffled screaming had also broken the relative silence in the neighborhood. Concealed by the scrap of metal that he had been sleeping under, Amadou slowly peered into the street. In the dim light, he saw the outlines of men wrestling someone to the ground and continuously beating the unidentifiable figure. Though darkness shielded the peoples' faces from view, he could tell that the distressed person was young, from the constant yelling and calls for help.

With the emotion that poured out with the desperate cries, Amadou had to turn away and try to block out the noise, as tears started to well up in his eyes. He heard the pleading voice in his head now too, because it was the same voice that had been asking for his assistance in the nightmare he'd had. The voice, similar to his mother's, had screamed ferociously until it was smothered by the hand of the individual taking advantage of the woman whose voice it was that was releasing a prayer for someone or something to save her. Spreading pain through his head with its emotional strength, the vision and the crying had torn him from his sleep to come face to face with a similar situation, but this time in real life. Had it been a

warning to him? Had he been called on by Allah, by destiny to intervene here?

Torn between whether he should run from this neighborhood to escape what was going on or stay and fight off these men, Amadou pulled himself together and beckoned for someone to guide him. But as in so many other times in his life, he was now all-alone and the only one who could support himself and push himself forward. And so, deep within his heart he grasped for the courage of his mother who'd brought him into the world and battled illness. He reached out for the hands of his fallen family and ancestors, rising to encourage him on. It was clear to Amadou now, because he knew the value of life, that he must step in to stop the merciless abusers.

Once again peeking around the side of the scrap metal that he'd taken shelter beneath, Amadou spotted a wall to which he could sneak before he made his move. The sound of the punching and waning hollers of the girl still piercing his ears, he picked up a rod of metal and made a break for it. He now stood with his back against the compound wall, breathing heavily. With stealth and self-control, despite how nervous he was, Amadou inched along the wall closer and closer to its corner. He could now plainly hear what words were being exchanged and the scuffling that was going on as the girl was openly raped, without intervention by any nearby soul.

Fear began to somehow bind his legs and blood rushed throughout his

body ferociously, so ferociously that it almost felt like his beating heart would break through his chest. His muscles battled his mind, just as it was sometimes when he knew he had to keep walking to find a safe spot to sleep but his legs wouldn't carry him anymore. Without letting his mind and his feelings react, he quickly sprung around the corner into the compound and ended up face to face with a terrifying sight.

Bloodied and crying in pain the girl tried again and again to escape the hold of one of the heartless young men. The other man was on his knees leaning over her, keeping her legs open and laughing as he took advantage of her. As Amadou encountered the event and ran in, he let his bravery and rush of adrenaline take over. Grabbing the one man around the neck and pulling him backwards, Amadou poured all his strength and anger into his punching and jabbing arms. The man finally fell to the ground after receiving numerous knocks to the stomach from Amadou's elbow and the rod clenched in Amadou's hand. Without an attempt to get up and retaliate, the man lay moaning on the ground. Amadou had seen and been in fights numerous times on the streets. He'd carried bruises displaying the punishment he'd received from the older boys. He knew the pain of kicks and punches as one lay on the ground hopeless, and for this reason in the back of his mind he pitied the man. But at the same time, Amadou knew that this was how things worked. Look what pain the men had been

inflicting on this girl; did they not deserve to be punished?

Distracted by his nagging thoughts, he finally turned to see the other man still standing over his victim, but slowly making his move towards Amadou. With nothing held back, Amadou ran at the man as he staggered away from the girl. Avoiding the uncoordinated punches of the big-boned man, Amadou struck him in the legs and stomach with the rod, and when the man doubled over in pain Amadou hit him harder over the head. The man rolled over onto the ground, yelling with anger. Swinging his feet, the man tripped Amadou so that he fell onto the dusty ground.

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The blow of the hard floor knocked out Amadou's senses for a moment, but he came-to quickly. Jumping up before he could be harmed again, Amadou reacted by leaning over the stunned man and beating him continuously. His swings with the metal rod drew blood, and Amadou started to tear up as he slowed down and the man finally lay still. How had he done such a thing?

The whimpers of the girl not ten yards away brought Amadou's attention. As he battled his own emotions Amadou helped up the crying and bleeding girl. Looking into her face as he picked up her almost limp body, he was struck by its beauty despite the bruises and cuts. She had deep, brown, mesmerizing eyes and soft, round features. Amadou stared at her as he supported her weight and they made their escape from this neighborhood. Behind him, Amadou could

at once hear the yells of the man who'd survived. Scared for his own life as well as for the health of the beaten girl he was carrying, Amadou pushed his legs with all the possible will he had left, and began to run.

He did not know or look exactly where he was going, but his instincts carried him down long streets and small alleyways. Unaware of left and right, Amadou went in the direction his heart carried him. He didn't feel the weight of the girl on his back, or the strain on his leg muscles as he went mile after mile. In his mind he was flying, through the haze of the early morning. When finally he found a hidden place in an alleyway to stop and rest, he slowly knelt down and laid the sleeping girl against the base of wall. Exhausted from his run to safety and his escape from the haunting thoughts of killing, Amadou collapsed right beside her, breathing heavily.

He looked at her closely and was surprised by the wounds she carried. Quickly, he tore off his shirt and began to clean the patches of blood and wrap her cuts in cloth. Satisfied with how he'd treated her, Amadou leaned back against the wall and dozed off.

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Hearing the bustle of the morning stream of people and traffic heading through the markets, Amadou slowly opened his eyes. He quickly glanced beside him to check on the girl, and she still lay there. She was watching the street from underneath the cloth canopy under which they rested. Looking back at him she blushed, but kept his gaze. Their eyes met and she

released an embarrassed smile.

“Thank you, stranger,” she told him, in the Djerma language.

Amadou at first did not speak, just nodded in answer. “I did what I was called upon to do,” he finally responded. They both fell silent.

“I am Atifa,” she offered, after several minutes.

“...I am Amadou.”

“You have been a true savior to me, Amadou.”

And with those few words the two initiated themselves into a companionship that would build itself deeper and stronger. That first day they only rested and spoke, the business of the city moving around them as their two pasts and personalities intertwined through their conversations.

By day they sometimes went their separate ways when Amadou looked for ways to make money or to steal a mango or two from the market. At night they met up again and told each other stories of their families, while Amadou cared for her by cleaning her wounds. They lay side by side speaking of whatever came to mind – the joys and the hardships – long into the morning hours. On many occasions, Atifa cried and Amadou felt the pain with her. When Atifa told of her memory of her dying mother, Amadou had to turn away, for tears were dripping down his face as he thought about his own mother. Atifa would reply, “It’s ok, it’s ok. You are strong, Allah and your family will guide you.”

For days their routine followed this pattern, but soon Atifa had recovered well enough from her inju-

ries and was thinking once again of where the future would lead her. At one point, she had spoken of her brother whom she’d left in another town. They’d promised to meet each other, but troubles had kept her from returning. Amadou knew she had to move on to find the family she had left, and so he was prepared to go his own path now too.

On what seemed liked their final night, the two stayed mostly quiet. Atifa had told Amadou that she planned to leave the next day, because if she waited any longer she might not ever find her brother again. Numerous times it seemed like she might plead him to come with her; instead she kept those thoughts inside. The conversation went on and they still smiled at each other, but the loss of each other’s companionship seemed imminent.

The next morning they awoke in the heat of a new, clear day and began their journey across the city. Amadou had agreed to bring her across the city he knew so well, to the spot where she would move on by herself. Struggle had bonded them and now their own struggles would pull them apart. After hours of walking down the busy streets and past the fresh smelling stands of the markets, the pair made it to down the hill to the banks of the river.

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As he walked across the bridge with her by his side, it felt like he was leaving one world behind and stepping into another. In his heart, Amadou knew he could not leave. Even though starting life anew some-

place else might bring him opportunities, he couldn't leave the home he was tied to. All he knew were the sounds and the smells of Niamey. He knew the struggles of life on the streets here. Abandoning the home he raised himself in and could now survive in would be like abandoning all hope for his life altogether. Life was tough everywhere in the country, he had heard, so giving up now on the only place that could maybe bring him a sensible job or education in the future would make little sense.

"I must go, before it is too late," she simply said, as she looked out at the horizon. The sky shown red and a soft purple with the slowly disappearing light of the sun. Reflecting the beautiful colors of the endless heavens above them, the river shown with a rich glow of warmth. The walkway was filled with people rushing off through the evening calm, and traffic still poured across the bridge. Atifa and Amadou walked close by each other, careful not to lose one another

as the last moments of their time together slipped by.

"Will you come back?" Amadou replied into the silence that hung between them.

"... I don't know," came the soft response.

When they reached the end of the bridge, their footsteps slowed. She turned to him and, with the glint in her amazing eyes and her shy smile, she embraced him, without a care for societal rules or expectations.

"I owe you a great amount of gratitude. You saved my life Amadou," she whispered to him.

Releasing each other, they stood face to face. Amadou tried to hold back the emotion building inside him. When she looked at him, he attempted to force a smile, but inside he was saddened.

"You could come with me," she offered him, as she walked in her chosen direction.

"No, I cannot leave. This is my city. It is home."

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*Young Fulani boys, who became my friends, taking a rest from soccer in the hot mid-day sun.*



# Batman 3:

by Gabriela Stern

*Return of the Joker...or new evil faces?  
What to expect in the sequel to "The Dark Knight"*

It sounds as though fans are going to have to wait another year for the sequel to the Hollywood blockbuster "The Dark Knight." Executive producer Michael Uslan says that 2011 is the projected year for the new Batman film. It is unclear as of right now whether Christopher Nolan, the director of the last two Batman movies, will return for the third one.

However, I think that what everyone is wondering is what heroes and villains will appear in the next Batman movie. There have been no official announcements concerning the cast as of yet, but that hasn't stopped interviewers asking anyone involved with "The Dark Knight" question after question about who we can expect to see in the next movie.

After the tragic death of Heath Ledger right after the end of the filming of "The Dark Knight" many are wondering if he will be replaced by a new actor in the next film. Will we see a new portrayal of The Joker or will The Joker simply be cut from the storyline following Ledger's overdose? When asked this very question, actor Gary Oldman replied, "They recast Katie Holmes' character. I understand that this is a different circumstance, but I think another actor could do the job. I think Heath would want another actor to do the job." No ideas yet as to who might attempt to follow in Ledger's footsteps as The Joker, if indeed the part is carried on. If The Joker character is in the next movie though, we may also see Harley Quinn (The Joker's girlfriend and evil sidekick).

After Oldman had a moment to pause and think, he went on to say, "Maybe we don't need the Joker because we'll have **The Riddler**." So it sounds as though The Riddler is a good candidate for a Batman villain returning to the screen. There are rumors that Johnny Depp might play The Riddler in the sequel to "The Dark Knight", but no confirmation yet.

Another question that many fans have been craving the answer to since watching "The Dark Knight" is, "Is Two-Face really dead?" Aaron Eckhart (Two-Face) is sick of people asking him over and over again this very question. People high up on the Batman movie chain have said that Two-Face is dead for good, but I'm not convinced. I would not rule him out as a sinister face returning in the next film.

There have also been many rumors going around that Catwoman may be appearing in the third Batman movie. Which leads to the question, "Who would play Catwoman in the film?" Candidates rumored to be up for the role include Angelina Jolie, Rachel Weisz, Jessica Biel, Kate Beckinsale, and Maggie Gyllenhaal. Yes, I said Maggie Gyllenhaal. No doubt readers will be wondering how this is possible since Rachel Dawes (Gyllenhaal's character) died in "The Dark Knight." However, in one of the old Batman comic books, Rachel Dawes becomes Catwoman, which is why Catwoman and Batman have a love interest.

I think it's about time in this Batman movie series that Batman's loyal sidekick Robin shows up. It's not certain though that he will appear in the next movie. When asked about the return of Robin, Christian Bale (Batman) said he was not happy about this idea at all. In fact, Bale was quoted to say, "If Robin crops up in one of the new Batman films, I'll be chaining myself up somewhere and refusing to go to work." Although, maybe this has to do with Bale not wanting to share the hero spotlight in the next Batman film.

Other possible villains include Black Mask (who was rumored almost made it into "The Dark Knight"), The Penguin, Poison Ivy, Bane, Mr. Freeze, and Talia al Ghul. Talia al Ghul may be a good candidate for the new movie because she is the daughter of Ra's al Ghul. She may be back to avenge her father's death in "Batman Begins" and she was a love interest of Batman in the old comic books.

No matter who shows up in this next Batman film, they certainly have big shoes to fill after the success of "The Dark Knight" with Heath Ledger's unforgettable performance as The Joker. I'm sure fans are eager to see where the sequel will go.

### *sources and further reading:*

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## Sr. Airman Filipe Bizzaria February 7, 1988 – April 15, 2009 by Bridget Lindstrom

Filipe Bizzaria was born on February 7, 1988. Filipe was an inspiration to many people. He attended Lincoln Park Community School and then went on to graduate from Somerville High School. After high school Filipe joined the United States Air Force. He was a very smart young man and an important asset to the Air Force. He would delight in challenging tasks and had a genuine love for what he did. Filipe loved being a part of the Air Force.

On April 14, 2009, Filipe was in a motorcycle accident while driving in Shreveport, Louisiana. His motorcycle caught the

back of a truck and he died in the hospital the following morning. It came as a shock to everyone who knew him. Being the courageous and confident person he was, no one ever thought Filipe would die so young. He gave off a feeling of immortality and always seemed to believe he could do anything.

Filipe was very brave, loving and funny. He lived for making people smile and causing mischief. Many people know about the practical jokes he frequently pulled just to make other people laugh or to amuse himself. Everywhere he went whole-hearted smiles and pure joy followed. His courage and love for life influenced others to not be afraid and live life to the fullest. Filipe loved life so much. He was a brother, a son, a grandson, a nephew, a cousin, a friend, a shoulder to cry on and a source of happiness. Filipe and everything about him, along with his thousand mile smile, is going to be greatly missed. Filipe will live on in every heart he touched, every inside joke he was a part of and every person who loved him.





Senior Airman Filipe Bizzaria

## Hunter Pope

by Katie Massie

Have you ever lost someone who isn't a good friend, but who you saw sometimes, and whose house you'd been to once or twice, and who you had known for a long time, and who you had had good times with, but you barely saw each other? Because I have. Before February vacation, I would not have been able truthfully to say I had. But, as of February 15<sup>th</sup>, I am now able to say I have. I have known Hunter Pope since I was 5 or 6. If someone mentioned Hunter Pope, I would know who he was. But, on Feb-

bruary 15, 2009, Hunter died because of a flu that might have gone to his heart.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> was Hunter's funeral and all I could think about was how I would never be able to see his funny, toothy grin again. It is so easy to try to erase all the sad memories and to expect to see him at my church on Sunday. Hunter was a funny person, and the last time I saw him he had a black eye, though he wouldn't tell us why. He was bouncing a ball around the room and smiling.

Hunter Pope was a goofy person, and I will always remember him.

## **life**

Danielle Vitalo

There is something beautiful dying every day,  
There is nothing you can do,  
Nothing you can say.  
Life moves on even if you don't.  
Someone will take your chances  
if you won't.  
Keep your eyes open and lungs clear  
you have to keep breathing  
no matter the fear.  
This life that you live, it's not on your time  
you can't expect everything  
to fall in a straight line.  
Forgive and move on, don't live in the past,  
life is short,  
and it's over too fast.  
Talk to people, tell them how you feel  
this isn't a fantasy,  
everything is real.  
it may not be what you had in mind  
but sometimes  
it's about what you find.  
Life can be very strange,  
but there's nothing  
in this world that doesn't change.  
And when it changes you too need to bend  
you have the choice,  
it depends whether you see a start or an end.

## **Phobia**

Gerald Robinson

She's as dark as the shadows.  
She's a venomous black widow  
Ready to strike from any angle.  
Her silver linings cause bafflement in her foes.  
As she gets closer she strikes  
And causes fear and hysteria.  
She is a phobia in physical form  
And she's not going anywhere.

# Alcoholism

Gerald Robinson

Is this that glamorous?  
To be intoxicated in such a way  
That you harm others by accident?  
Is it that funny to wake up every day  
Wondering what happened the night before?  
When is it no longer cool?  
When your solution to everything  
Becomes "All I need is a drink."?  
When you lose control of your bodily functions  
And soil yourself in your own filth?  
Is it still awesome when you hurt everyone you love  
And you're left with nothing except that bottle  
That you hold with your life?  
Is it the way to live when you're in Rehab  
And at the bottom of society?  
Think about this long and hard because  
The pain is definitely not worth all that you love.

# Beauty

Gerald Robinson

The moon glistens in the sky.  
The scent of sweet roses clings to the wind  
As it caresses my face with a gentle breeze.  
As I close my eyes I can feel her there.  
She still stands with me after all these years  
So warm and so full of life.  
She calls my name and my body becomes warm.  
All I can hear is my heart racing in my chest  
Demanding me to reach out and touch her one last time.  
She feels so warm and suddenly  
I'm in love again fully and eternally.  
I lean in to kiss her  
But before our lips meet I open my eyes  
Only to find myself in loneliness.  
I think and come to realize that I'm never alone.  
She's always here with me.  
My eternal love, my everlasting beauty.

# My World

Gerald Robinson

I've finally cracked and lost my nerve.  
I buried my secrets in my skin  
Even deeper than intended in one instance.  
I laugh as I realize how cold everyone is,  
How I was always alone regardless of the crowds,  
The faces watching me,  
Pretending to be there for me and laughing  
As they manipulate me making me their puppet.  
I'm heartless and no longer caring,  
Ready to cut again but not myself,  
Not this time.  
This time to cut everyone else and end them.  
This rage consumes me and my eyes are burning,  
Memories hurting to make me retaliate,  
But I wake up from my world and realize  
It was only a nightmare that felt so real,  
Everyone was fake and still are  
And those that aren't are still here  
Keeping me from losing it and yet  
The apparitions show up but have no power.  
In the end I have to defeat myself.

## Game Review: Age of Mythology

by Ethan Sweeting and Jeremy Nelson

**Age of Mythology** is a game based on Greek, Norse, and Egyptian mythology, hence the name, Age of Mythology. In the game you build a city and an army. Then, follow the objective: launching a massive attack, finding lost relics, or defending your city. There are three types of game play: Campaign, skirmish, or online play. In campaign mode, you choose a ma-

yor god and go through levels, fighting other civilizations and completing objectives. In skirmish mode, you start by building a town center and building a temple. Then, once you have made an army, you attack the other civilizations.

The last and most popular mode is online play. In this mode, you play online. In online play, you can either

host a game or join a game. When you host a game, you can decide where it is, how long it is, and how much resources each player starts with. The instant ability to play with people on different computers, in your different friends' houses, or just play somebody random is amazing.

In the game, there are three kinds of units. One of the types of units is *human* units, which are just regular human soldiers with swords, spears, and bows. The second type of unit is a *hero*. Heroes are humans with extremely powerful attacks. They are very challenging to kill because they can fend off myth units with ease. The last unit is a *myth* unit. Myth units consist of the strongest creatures in the game. Some myth units are the Minotaur, Cyclops, fire giants, frost giants, mountain giants, sphinxes, and wajets. Wajets are snakes with small wings on their necks. They can spit poison and move very quickly.

Another myth unit is a titan. They are the most powerful creatures in the game. Titans are huge monsters that can crush almost an entire city. Most titans have about seven thousand health, and 90 attack stat. The titan you get depends on what god you are worshiping. If you are worshiping a Greek god, you get a three headed dog titan. If you worship an Egyptian god your titan will be Raw. Raw is a creature with a man's body and a bird's head. If you worship a Norse

god, you get a big pale white giant with a huge ice hammer.

Also, in Age of Mythology, there is something called God Powers. A God power is something you are granted by the gods that allows you to use special abilities, from healing your army, to destroying theirs. Some God Powers are Earthquakes, Walking Woods, Underworld Passage and much more! An earthquake can be targeted on an enemy's city. Underworld Passage transports you and your army to any place on the map. Walking Woods can be very helpful. First, you target a group of trees. Then, the trees will come to life and guard your town center.

Another thing about Age of Mythology is the cheats. There are cheats for almost everything. Here is a list of some of them:

**TITANOMACHY:** This cheat gives you a titan.

**PANDORAS BOX:** Gives you 4 random god powers.

**WRATH OF THE GODS:** Gives you unlimited Tornado, Lightning, Meteor, and Earthquake god powers.

**Note about the God Powers:** To use the cheats, just press enter when you are in the middle of any level. After you press enter, type in the cheat. Have caps lock on when you type in the cheats!! Then when you are done typing the cheats, press enter/return.

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# Leaving

Gabriela Stern

Millions of miles away, the midnight sky floated over our heads in the darkness. The stars hung tantalizingly above me, as though they knew that my deepest desire at the moment was to join them far, far away from this place. I had never felt so alone, even as our fingers intertwined in the grass beneath us. I hoped that if I just squeezed them tighter, he might never disappear, but this was just a wasted dream. I knew that no matter what I said, no matter what I did, he was leaving...too soon, and so I kept my silence.

I held my gaze on the heavens so as not to look into his face. I was afraid that if our eyes met, the flow of tears would be endless. And I couldn't stand to cry...and I knew he couldn't stand my crying either. It would make everything much, much harder.

I marveled at how acute my senses could be. My nerves were jangling, but all I could feel was the gentle nip of the wind on my cheeks, the feeling of his hand in mine and a looming sense of dread that I couldn't shake.

*'You think too much,'* I told myself silently. And it was definitely true, for my thoughts were racing as my heart sunk, heavier than ever, into my chest. If only I could have convinced him not to go, for I had a terrible feeling inside of me...a feeling that this was our last day on earth. At least our last day on earth together.

I could sense his head turned toward me, trying to catch my eyes, but I stared resolutely upward. It was so beautiful out here and I could not think of a better place to spend our last time together. The absence of the city glare of lights allowed the stars to illuminate to a brightness most city folks probably couldn't imagine. But some of the beauty seemed to be taken away with my preoccupation. Even the full moon seemed to be looking sadly down upon me.

I imagined how happy I would have been if we were here under different circumstances. I could almost hear our laughter as we snuggled in the cool grass, below the stars and above everyone else in our lives. They wouldn't have been able to touch us here...we could have been happy...really, truly happy.

"Baby," he whispered. I could hear the plea in his voice and reluctantly turned my face to his.

He smiled at me...but it was a broken smile compared to the one I was so used to seeing light up his face. His joy usually made it all the way from his lips to his eyes...but not tonight...maybe never again.

"I don't know what to do," I told him honestly. I needed to be honest with him right now.

"I don't know what to say babe. Duty calls."

*Duty calls.* It was like every Army commercial I'd seen since the beginning of this war, like "Army strong." I had to set all of that aside, because it was happening now, whether I decided to accept that or not.

"I love you," he murmured in my ear. My eyes stung and burned and I felt the first tears roll down my cheeks and onto the ground.

"I love you too." And the tears never stopped.

## Star Trek: A Twist on a Classic for a New Generation

by Gabriela Stern

Going into the movie theater to see the recent Star Trek film, I didn't know what to expect, never having seen any of the old Star Trek movies or episodes of the show. The extent of my Star Trek knowledge were simply the names Spock and Kirk; and I only knew them because they have slowly wormed their way into pop culture over the years. However, walking out I was pleasantly surprised by how exhilarating and engrossing the movie was. I came out a Star Trek fan.

Beyond the incredible action, the riveting plot line and mind blowing special effects, what really made the movie for me was the acting. Chris Pine stars as

James Tiberius Kirk and brings an amusing attitude to the role. A relatively unknown actor before this film, Pine has certainly solidified his acting career by making sure that no one will soon forget him as the young Kirk. Zachary Quinto (from the television series *Heroes*) was amazing as the young Spock. His interesting facial features worked seamlessly with the "Spock" haircut, eyebrows and ears to create a beautifully alien look. His voice and demeanor radiated Spock, which was intensified by the fact that Leonard Nimoy makes an appearance as Spock Prime. Other great performances were delivered by Zoe Saldana, John Cho, Anton Yelchin, Simon Pegg, and Eric Bana.

Each added their own charm, wit, sexual tension, and in Bana's case terrifying intensity as the antagonist, Nero, to the film.

I'm sure that many fans of the old Star Trek could argue that it simply could never be as good as the original. As a newly converted fan however, I think that this Star Trek movie did an incredible job of grabbing the attention of a new generation while still staying true to the old characters and story. The action and special effects work in the film was essential for getting younger viewers into the Star Trek saga.

I also felt that the fact that this Star Trek started from the beginning was a very creative way of getting new fans excited about the series. Instead of continuing where other Star Trek films had left off, they took you back to a place in time which would be new for old and new fans alike. Regardless if you were being shown the origins of the character you knew and loved or being introduced to the series from the beginning, it was certainly effective.

It was interesting to see the evolution of all the characters,

though none as much so as Kirk and Spock. Most people are aware that the pair are good friends in the Star Trek series. However, in the beginning of this Star Trek movie Kirk and Spock butt heads when Kirk joins the Star Fleet. Spock is a higher ranking officer than Kirk and does his best to keep Kirk off the U.S.S. Enterprise, where the most action of the film takes place. After Kirk encounters the older Spock while deserted on a frigid planet, he finds out that Spock and he become friends later on. This and the fact the Kirk is Captain of the Enterprise in the future lead him to fulfill the destiny that he is accustomed to in the old Star Trek show and movies. Also the history of Spock's race and planet play an important role in the evolution of his character in the film.

I would recommend this movie to anyone who enjoys a good action movie with great acting and an intriguing plot. Whether you know everything or anything about Star Trek you are in for the ride of your life with one of the biggest films of 2009!

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# Flutter

Tayla Plett

My heart flutters; your hand's in mine  
It turns off my mind  
And as I unwind  
You kiss me  
So softly.  
We've got nowhere and everywhere to go;  
We've got til sun up to sun down  
And you're feeling kinda anxious  
So we're speeding out of town.  
The world is our own  
driving by  
But it's more gorgeous than itself  
Reflected in your eyes.  
When the sky opens up  
And the angels cry,  
The rain beats on the roof  
And you give me that smile.  
So fast we're out in it  
Together in it soaked  
The rain surrounds us  
And it provokes  
Your embrace 'cause I'm in your arms again;  
Untouchable. Except to everything.  
Laughing so hard it hurts to,  
Laughing harder 'cause we don't know why;  
Laughing mostly because I love you  
And how my heart flutters when your hands  
are in mine.



Rae Acher