



A Program of:



and



Student Anthology

Table of Contents

Her Name Was Summer.....	1
Caitlyn Cook	
Matthew.....	2
Mara Russell	
I'll Fight For You.....	4
Michael Smallwood	
One Nation Under One Flag.....	5
Shae Johnson	
GlaDos.....	7
Kat Mahoney	
Untitled.....	8
Kiya Rizzo	
Queen of the Ridge.....	9
Lily Bond	
Karen.....	11
Joseph Dinwiddie	
There Are Many People In This Room.....	13
Tyla Foster	
The Curious Case of the Gap Guardian.....	14
Luna Linville	
Birdhouses.....	19
Jordan Taverner	
Acknowledgements.....	20

Her Name Was Summer

By Caitlyn Cook, 9th grade, Cottontown, TN

Her voice sounded the way lemonade tastes on a hot summer afternoon,
The crackling fire as the snow slowly drifts down from above
And lets you know everything's alright, if only for this one moment.
She smells like the perfect blend of juicy apples and fresh cinnamon
Coming from your grandma's kitchen on a Sunday evening,
Thick swirls of vanilla icing on soft cinnamon buns your momma cooked just for
you
Only cause it was your birthday.
She felt like that tiny black kitten
You found on the side of Fowler Ford Road, way up in a tree,
Who scrambled down and meowed and shook in your lap the whole way
home
And now she's your best friend,
Silk pajamas your great aunt brought home from Paris,
So smooth and cool to the touch,
You were never allowed to wear because you'd ruin them.
She tastes like strawberry shortcake your grandma makes at Thanksgiving,
Always secretly giving you her piece after everyone else is gone,
Fresh peaches on a July morning,
Juice running down your lips,
And you're happy to clean up the sticky mess.
She looks like the ocean at sunset,
So beautiful and calm in a moment,
And in the next,
Everything you thought you had was gone,
A downpour in the summer,
Violent but necessary, never lasting for too long,
Calming, nice to look at, nice to hear,
Quickly changing into something more,
She rips through everything you worked so hard for,
And suddenly,
Everything you ever loved is gone.

Matthew

By Mara Russell, 9th grade, Nashville, TN

The story of who I am cannot be severed from the story of my brother. The memory of his elementary years is scrawled, along with my love for him, on my bones. Just before Kindergarten, before we moved from our little town of Lancaster, Ohio to the big city in Tennessee, my brother was diagnosed with severe Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder. It wasn't until years later that they also discovered his anxiety, depression, and mild Asperger's Syndrome. The years before all those discoveries are the ones I remember most.

When I was in third grade and he was in first, my brother peed on the swing set. On purpose. He bit my friends and chased them across the playground. He didn't understand personal space, or privacy, or why he had to sit still all the time and not make sudden loud noises while everyone else was sleeping.

Sometimes people couldn't believe we were related. My friends would tell me that I had to get him to settle down. I was the older sister, after all. They stared at me incredulously, and asked me how I could live with a person like that.

Honestly, at first, I was confused. I hadn't met anyone else's little brother. I'd just heard that they were annoying, but you loved them, and that seemed to fit my brother perfectly.

As he got older and older, however, I did notice a difference between him and the other little boys. I noticed the pills he took every day. I noticed the day we ran out of them and had to pretend that he had caught a cold so he wouldn't have to go to school. I noticed how he never got invited to parties, or sleepovers, or playdates. I noticed how he didn't have any friends.

That's when I started to worry. I watched him on the playground constantly, out of the corner of my eye. I translated for him when no one else understood his rapid mumbling. I calmed him when he screamed. I laughed with him when he cried.

My brother started doing badly in the third grade. I think, although I don't know for sure, that that was the year he noticed something was wrong too. He couldn't focus on his multiplication. His handwriting was illegible. His grades were dropping by the day.

I've met many people that didn't believe his disorder was real. My ninth grade Wellness teacher told us it was all a hoax to sell more medication. Sure, the disease is often over diagnosed or misdiagnosed. But I assure you,

this is disorder is real. I've done the research. I've seen the effects.

In third grade my brother's teacher was another woman who didn't believe in this "imaginary disease," and was convinced, (as she explained to my parents) that he was doing all of this on purpose, just to torment her. So she treated him just as she would any other disobedient student, using punishment after punishment. I'm certain the elementary school principal remembers my brother's name. Had he been sent to her office for more positive reasons, they would probably be on a first name basis, he was there so often. On several occasions, they threatened to kick him out of the school for these things that were out of his control.

It's probably why I remember these years most of all. There were many days and nights spent crying in the living room, my brother desperately wondering what was wrong with him, and how he would be able to sit still another day.

That year took a heavy toll, not just on my brother's psyche, but on all of my family. My mother spent more and more time in bed and less time on her lesson plans. My dad grew angrier. I cried to myself, not wanting to further worry my family, and wondered why this burden had been placed on this sweet boy's young shoulders.

That year did not go by in semesters, months, or weeks. The family progressed in days, just hoping to God that there wouldn't be another disaster. Every day was another walk on my brother's thin ice.

We made it through that year, and many more years since. His old troubles have gone, to be replaced by new ones, on and on as my family grows older and wiser. But I'll always remember those years which changed us all. My brother's story is now a part of me.

I'll Fight for You

By Michael Smallwood, 9th grade, Bean Station, TN

America's in pain from a wound we never gained.
What have we done? Have we gone completely insane?
How can we help when we fight each other every day?
Someone needs to stand up and say, "I'll fight for you."

There's good in this world
Just look deep in our hearts.
If we use our thoughts for bad or worse,
Then we will all be carried in a hearse.
But either way, I'll fight for you.

America has strength,
She's holding it back.
While we help other countries
as a matter of fact,
We can stand up and fight,
or we could just die.
America needs us to come together as one but if we don't, we all are done.
But either way I'll fight for you.

One Nation Under One Flag

By Shae Johnson, 10th grade, Sneedville, TN

In this world filled with a shortage of charity, absurdity roams rampant. This absurdity comes in the form of a bully, of a war, even of an inequality among races. I can only imagine the fear and uncertainty of walking down a street being looked down on and shamed because my skin tone was dark. I cannot fathom the ideas society used to justify the cruel acts of violence targeted toward African Americans.

While attending the Appalachian Young Writers' Workshop, I visited a place I had never known prior to the trip: Clinton, Tennessee. The town was out of place in modern times, but its charm left me wondering what it was like in its day. As I packed myself into a historic classroom with repainted, ghostly blue walls and re-laid floors, I continued imagining this same question. The answer tore my heart.

My answer's source was a passionate, humorous, considerate African American man. He told us that Clinton's high school was the first to be integrated in the segregated South. The transition progressed as smoothly as could be expected until two years later when someone opposed the idea so strongly they bombed the school and left it in a heaping pile of ash, shattered brick, and destruction. No one was arrested, but luckily, no one was harmed.

This man told the group of the moment he claimed his freedom back from the Jim Crow laws. I remember it this way: he was in sixth grade. The small, now historic, town of Clinton was scattered with "Whites Only" signs; the colored population was treated as third class. Being below second class and certainly not first, this man and his buddy decided to seize their rights.

The boys went to a diner, ordered their bubbling soda with meals, then sat down at a counter where "blacks" were not served. The elderly man recalled the pride his former self felt, and I can imagine him marching out the doors with his chest puffed out like a soldier headed out to war because that is what this was: war.

Violence, on one hand, keeps me aware and passionate, but on the other, creates knots in my stomach. Even today, the difference society makes between people of color and white Americans is evident, and it is time to lay

aside that difference. The man from that old small schoolhouse that he once called his own put it this way, "We are *all* one nation, under one flag."

GLaDOS

By Kat Mahoney, 10th grade, Bristol, VA

Woke up in a cube with a voice overhead,
he said we gotta make sure you aren't dead,
gotta get inside your head, little girl.
Skip ahead a few thousand years and they woke me up again
with a little British robot and a prerecorded thing.
Got through the first stage and made it to the graveyard,
Angered the overlord,
found it wasn't that hard.
She dropped me down a chute,
dunno how I survived,
kept sayin' I lied,
sayin' I tried
to kill her,
but she's still alive!

Untitled

By Kiya Rizzo, 10th grade, Rose Hill, VA

The sun beats the girl.
Impressionable shadows stalk her.

Asphalt absorbs her attacker's brutality,
Scalding her child-sized feet.

Frosty the Snowman decorations
Melt in the summer heat.

Splintered lips assault a wooden spoon,
Hoping for the last drip of sugar-flavored ice.

No thoughts of her childless mother
Flutter through her mind.
Only curious questions about the
Car-exhaust oxygen.

Her eyes gaze at a sky colored smog
Before examining the clones of her home
That decorate the street.

The sounds of life that invade her ears grow stronger
As the sun weakens.

Bright lights from over-populated cities
Rule the sky.
Fear grows as night walkers take over.

The abandoned sidewalk floods with life.
She has no place among these streets.

Where does she belong among the
Alcohol and paraphernalia?

This jungle of humans
Holds no place for innocence.

Queen of the Ridge

By Lily K. Bond, 11th grade, Middlesborough, KY

A mahogany coffin sits in the center of a spacious well lit room. There's a woman laid out in the coffin. She is dressed in her best Sunday linen suit. Her hair is snow white, her face is pale and wrinkled, and her face was one that watched a century pass. The casket lid is lowered, sealing her away forever.

Dry raspy voices fill the air. Elderly men and women sing an old gospel song, "*I thought number one would surely be me . . .*" Higher, younger voices join in the song, "*I thought I could be what I wanted to be . . .*" Children walk solemnly with their living ancestors. Finally the young and middle aged men and women add their voices to the multi-generational song, "*I thought I could make it on life's sinking sand. But I can't even walk without You holding my hand . . .*"

The large group of family members walks hand-in-hand across an open field. The grass is bright green in the sunshine, wildflowers are blooming everywhere, bugs flit among the tall grass that's stirred by the cool mid-summer breeze, but the mourners take no notice. From the hilltop field, pine trees a hundred yards away could be seen by the mourners. The elderly walk tall and proud like the mountains themselves. The children are sober during the walk and song; they stare ahead like miniature soldiers. The second and third generation adults walk beside the elders and youngers, supporting them like the great pines in the distance.

Ahead of the family, eight men carry the mahogany casket between them. The pallbearers gently lower the coffin next to the grave that's already prepared. The family gathers around the coffin and begins to sing again, this time a song about saying goodbye but not for long. The family says goodbye to a mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and dear friend. But most of all she was their matriarch, their queen.

Flower petals are thrown as the queen is lowered into the ground, and afterwards the family leaves to celebrate the life of their lost leader.

Food is eaten at her old house and then they take turns telling stories of their lost matriarch. Not all the stories are sad, but all of them are lessons taught by their departed loved one. The night isn't entirely about sadness; it's more about remembering her laugh, her smile, and the way she spoke. The eldest son of the lost queen stands and silence falls over his family. He lifts his cup and stares at the moon that had climbed into the sky hours ago. "To the queen." The sentiment is repeated by the crowd. The little house full of family

sits high on the ridge where the queen used to watch over her family and kingdom.

Karen

By Joseph Dinwiddie, 11th grade, Talbott, TN

Karen walked into the back room of the art co-op. The whirring fan did little to relieve the heat of the over-all humidity. A heavy rain hung in the air. Karen missed the days when the heat wouldn't bother her, when her hormones weren't raging; she would have worn a tank top and shorts.

Twenty-five years ago, she had hiked the Appalachian Trail on her own. At twenty-three, she was no thin girl—her legs muscular, and her hips noticeable. It seemed then that every boy would just linger around her, as if they wanted to reach out and run their fingers through her long, dark brown hair. When she wasn't hiking, she would always wear it down; she liked it that way. She had full, pouty lips that everyone complimented—even other girls. Her eyes, one of the darker shades of brown, could melt even the coldest of hearts. Her soft skin was lightly tanned, her features appealing like a fine painting that you could stare at for hours without blinking.

Back then, boys tried to grab her ass. She didn't mind that, except when they slapped it; she found it annoying. She would spin around and talk in the same tone that you would to dog, and say "bad boy." She smiled a crooked smile as they tried to apologize, and failing hard, just turning red. She knew that she was a tease, but she couldn't see why they took such an interest in her. Her chest was small—she was no bombshell. But she had attitude. God, she had attitude. This alone attracted them like flies to honey.

Growing up, Karen lived in a small town called the Gap. At fifteen, her father got a job in Sevierville, and so they left their little town for the big city. When she turned sixteen, she noticed that boys began to watch her.

A knock came from the front door of the co-op and brought her out of her daydream.

"Hi, Mama!" The voice of her daughter rang out in the room.

"Hello, Kitty," Karen said in response. Karen's daughter looked like a mirror reflection of her. She smiled a crooked smile. "Let's go home, Kitty," she said.

They began to walk home, stopping at the local cafe on the way. The cafe was small and crowded. A college student was outside snapping photos. Moving like a bee from angle to angle.

Life in this pinprick of a town was easy going most of the time. It was just the kind of place to raise a child. Kityra was born sixteen years ago. They lived alone. Three years after Kitty was born her father died serving overseas. He was a good man, a loving man, and, most of all, a good father.

They didn't talk about it as often now, but it still hurt Karen to think about it. She didn't hide it from her daughter. When Kitty asked about her father, Karen always answered her the best way she could. At first, it hurt so badly that Karen would break down, and Kitty would ask, in that way little kids do when they don't understand, what was the matter. His passing brought them together. To this day, they both carry a photo of them altogether. Kitty's father is dressed in his uniform with Karen and Kitty standing beside him wearing matching blue dresses. It was the last photo they took as a family before he died, and this has always kept him close.

There Are Many People in this Room **By Tyla Foster, 11th grade, Mt. Juliet, TN**

The door chimes and becomes a human example of barn doors, cast iron pans, and bowing wheat.

The door chimes and footsteps follow in polished shoes and with laced gloves, holding a ticket to a suit.

There are many people in this room.

Another chime becomes painted scenery.

A walking sunset of envy and a well lived sketchbook. More chimes stride in blue, a floating melody, the Princess of Harmony, and the music sheets follow.

There are many people in this room.

One face for many mask

Multiple scenes with strong characters.

This today and that tomorrow.

Our books are filled with different chapters.

The bell chimes a pure example of serenity.

A sturdy pole cleansed with red, white, and blue.

The last chime; little legs with scratched knees, soft cheeks, and an innocent mind, with untied shoes.

There are many people in this room.

The Curious Case of the Gap Guardian

By Luna Linville, 12th grade, Cana, VA

The phone rang at three in the morning. I fumbled for it. My sister's voice, frantic on the other end of the line, cried, "My son's missing."

I bolted out of bed and raced around the house, grabbing shirts, underwear, mismatched socks. My mind mulled over the details as though I were pouring over the pages of a grim novel. These things didn't just happen to people I knew, not in real life, not to my family.

"He disappeared a few days ago," Alissa said in a rush. "We woke up one morning, and Will was gone. Bed messy, no note, no one in town had seen him. He didn't even wake Risty May."

It took me four hours to reach Cumberland Gap from Hershey, Pennsylvania. It should have been a seven-hour drive, but my foot pressed heavy on the pedal and no stops were made for food or bathroom. Still the drive seemed too long, too slow.

My sister's house sat tucked away in a far corner of town between a shallow creek and a rustic convenience store. Alissa ran out to meet me, dressing gown clinging to her thin frame.

Sticking her head through the open window, my sister said in a low voice, "We haven't told Risty May anything yet. She thinks Will's backpacking around the country with his godparents. The whole town's in on this. And for God's sake, Tobias, you better not tell her nothing."

"But shouldn't we tell her now?" I asked, frowning. "She's five, Alissa, not oblivious. This isn't exactly going to be something we can hide when police start questioning everyone."

She ran one hand through her hair, fingers catching in the matted locks. "I let her stay at a friend's house the first few days when they were taking statements, but I'm overwhelmed without you nagging me. She's my daughter. Don't you tell me how to raise my kid."

Alissa stormed away. The screen door slammed shut. I drew a slow breath and followed.

Alissa's husband, Miles, greeted me at the door. His eyes held no devious gleam or charismatic twinkle, so unlike the photos hanging on the living room walls. The hardwood flooring creaked under my feet when I stepped through the doorway, as though it too was crying in grief.

"Thanks for getting here on such short notice. This'll mean a lot to Alissa when she's thinking more clearly," said Miles, his words mumbled. The man towered over me, but now, with shoulders hunched, he stood almost face-to-

face. Days-old stubble shadowed his face and heavy bags darkened downcast eyes. "I'll get you a blanket and pillow. Is the couch okay?"

I nodded and went to fetch my duffel bag from the Prius. Upon shutting the car door, I saw a young girl standing there.

Still a runt at five, Risty Mae's head barely reached my knees, but her thick wavy hair added inches to her height. Water dripped from the hem of her blue sundress, puddling at her bare feet. She clutched an enormous bullfrog in her hands that croaked for help. A shy smile blossomed on the girl's face, green eyes sparkling, and she said in a quiet voice, "Hi, Uncle Toby."

I swallowed. My throat tightened. "Hi-ya, kiddo."

Alissa walked Risty May to school the following morning, something she never did before Will's disappearance, Miles informed me. Then the two of us spent the day making phone calls, reaching out to authorities in the neighboring towns of Harrogate and Middlesboro. No eight-year-old boys had been found. Faculty at the nearby college offered to issue an official announcement, asking students to be on the lookout for an African American-Caucasian mix with black hair and brown eyes. Miles teared up at the offer; I accepted it on his behalf.

Miles made another call. But I walked away. Dishes were piled high in the sink. Dust bunnies skittered across the floor. Mounds of laundry were stacked against the side of the washing machine and spilled out into the hallway. I headed to the sink first.

Alissa returned home with Risty May in tow. She grabbed me by the sleeve of my button-up shirt and dragged me into her room—a fortress of stuffed animals and G.I. Joe action figures. We pitted the action figures against the animals, since we couldn't play cowboys and Indians outside as per request of Alissa Mayfield. Risty May showed me her rock collection and the secret pet salamander she kept in sink in the bathroom she shared with her brother.

"Risty May," I began then paused, fingering the rough mane of a yellow pegasus before throwing it on top of a blond-headed doll with an assault rifle; "When was the last time you heard from your brother?"

She shrugged and retaliated by shooting my baby tiger and rolling him onto his back, imitating an exaggerated groan of pain. "Dunno. Maybe a week ago."

"Do you miss him?"

"Mhmm hmm." And with that, my last Chinese dragon fell victim to the

blast of a plasma cannon.

A member of the police force knocked on the door after Alissa walked Risty May to school again the next day. He introduced himself as Sergeant Daniel Yule and asked if I could tell him a thing or two about my nephew. I said yes, and he conducted his interview on the front porch. While he talked, I memorized the exact locations of the sparse hairs on his head. He asked more questions. I counted thirty-two hairs.

That night at supper, Risty May asked why I had spent so long talking to the police officer.

Instantly, Alissa shot me a seething look, somehow appearing both offended and malicious.

“When did you see me with Sergeant Yule?” I asked. A safe question.

“The sub let us walk around town once we finished our reading,” she answered around a mouthful of mashed potatoes.

Miles blanched and fell victim to a sudden fit of coughing. He excused himself from the room not long after.

“So what were you talking about?” Risty May said. Her eyes, wide and unblinking, now raised to meet mine.

“Boring adult gossip,” said Alissa before I could even open my mouth.

Risty May poked at the plate with her spoon and said under her breath, “Grown-ups always say that.”

The fork missed Alissa's mouth and smeared macaroni salad across one cheek. My sister uttered a word capable of souring milk, and Risty May slapped her hands over her ears and said, “Bad word.” I made a big show of gasping and covering my mouth, and then winking at my niece. Risty May giggled. Alissa shot me a scathing look and retreated to the bathroom to clean up.

We ate in silence for a minute or two. When no sounds could be heard from the hall, I set down my utensils and turned to face Risty May. She didn't notice me at first—opting instead to bury the peas in the mashing potatoes—until I said in a gentle tone, “Risty May, what makes you think that adults always say that?”

“You know.”

I waited.

“When they talk about things kids don't understand.”

My fingers toyed with the hem of my shorts. “Do you ever wonder what those things might be?”

Her eyes met mine, a quick glance that fell back to her plate at equal

speeds. “People in town stare when they think I'm not looking,” she said, voice softening with every word. “The other kids at school act weird around me sometimes and nobody talks about Will. But he gave some of them baseball cards.”

“Well,” I drew a slow breath, “sometimes people get jealous. How many of your friends have ever gone backpacking?”

“None,” she said.

“And have any of them ever *wanted* to go backpacking?”

Another pea was prodded into the lump of potatoes. “I don't think so.”

Noting the reluctance in her tone, I smiled and said, “I think they're jealous. You shouldn't worry too much about everyone else, Risty May. They'll come around.”

“Why is Daddy up all night?”

I blinked and sat back in my seat.

“He wakes me up and even when I try to go back to sleep, the floor always squeaks when he walks and I can't. He's not looking too good, either.” At last, Risty May looked me full in the face, teeth nibbling on her lower lip. “Is Daddy sick?”

“Something like that,” I said. “His bad hip is bothering him.”

“Daddy doesn't have a bad hip.”

I frowned, though it was more of a wince. “Then I guess they're keeping something from you and me both, huh?”

This earned me a grin, and more lighthearted conversation was exchanged before Alissa sat back down at the table.

The next day, I volunteered to walk Risty May to school. I reminded her about jealousy, and suggested that she not talk about her brother for a while, just in case the other children held grudges. She agreed without complaint. By the time I returned to the house, the sheriff's vehicle pulled away and left Miles and Alissa standing on the porch. Alissa clutched at her head, tears leaking through her fingers and damp strands of hair. Miles had his arms around his wife, face buried in the backside of her shoulder.

“They found Will,” Alissa told me, choking up and putting her hand to her mouth. “A group of college students found Will on the edge of the road just off campus. The sheriff said it-” She broke off, tried to start a few times, and fell still after a sob sent shudders down her body.

“It looked like a hit and run,” said Miles in a whisper.

They try to tell you how it'll feel—the grief—but all I felt at that moment was nothing. It was as if someone had pulled the plug and every emotion drained away until all that remained was the shell of a man named Tobias.

“Oh, God... Who's going to tell Risty May?” Alissa realized aloud, horror ringing clear.

I took one look at them, my sister and her husband, clinging to one another because their legs looked ready to give out on them at any minute should they attempt to stand on their own. I took one look and said, “I'll do it.”

Alissa threw her arms around my shoulders and hugged me.

That evening, I met Risty May outside of her elementary school. She smiled enough for the both of us. She told me about everything she learned in class that day, what she ate for lunch, who snuck in the frog during the fire drill. Then she grinned up at me with such a radiant smile that I almost smiled back.

Now I felt it, but the emotion wasn't so much grief as guilt. And it hit me hard.

Dropping into a crouch, I struggled to keep my voice level when I said, “Risty May, there's something I need to tell you.”

Risty May nodded and said in excitement, “Of course, Uncle Toby! What is it?”

I looked her over, memorizing the slope of her smile and the adorable way she tilted her head to one side, the bright green eyes, like her father's, but the darker skin of her mother, and the curious personality all her own. I memorized her—my sweet, innocent niece.

Then I took a deep breath, organized my thoughts, and opened my mouth.

Birdhouses

By Jordan Taverner, 12th grade, Bristol, VA

There's a birdhouse store in the mountains that no one shops in. I'd swear on the endless acres surrounding the squat blue house that there's never been a car in either of the two open parking spaces. Maybe the jackknife turns of the road hide whatever bird enthusiasts squeal away before we see them, but little other explanation accounts for the chalkboard "open" sign swinging in cursive on the porch for the past 20 years. Pastel gutters and shutters can only carry a business so far; at some point it needs a customer or two to show up.

Whenever we pass this mystery on the drive to my grandma's, we take a road that my parents named the "High Twisties" when my sister and I were toddlers. We move on the empty, snaking road, and I thank my parents for nesting us in a real city with more than runaway truck ramps for neighbors. I say this like Bristol, where I'm from, is a city housing millions, not the wide spot in the road pushing 45,000 that it is. Despite this, our population is large enough to classify us as a city. We have a Starbucks and a Walmart and enough vehicles that the road-work traffic jams make people feel late and important.

There's something to be said for the neglected roads of the non-cities, though. Only minutes before we come up on the birdhouse store we pass the Lovers' Leap, its drop beginning just below the mountaintop. It's funny how one turn can send you jumping to your death with someone you love, and another lets you buy them a house. Granted, it's a house big enough only for birds, but it's as if the choice between the two twists can fill your bones with air and wrap them with feathers just light enough to fit in the house, or grow them full of cement—a construction zone blocking the door. Maybe the outcome hinges on whether you believe in the concepts of late and important.

This past January my parents and I left for my grandma's house later than we planned, the mountains and sky all blended into one shade of raven by the time we reached halfway. We pulled off at an overlook that reaches down into the valley, no curves in sight, no rolling tires behind us, just the thick quiet of winter darkness. I stood with my parents, looking down at everything we couldn't see below us, noticing that it would look the same whether we were gliding across the mountains or above them. And I thought that if I had a view like this all the time, I'd want someone to buy me a birdhouse to live in here, too.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the faculty and staff of the 2015 Appalachian Young Writers' Workshop: Darnell Arnoult, Director; Lacey Cook, *Director*; Mike Dobrzelecki, *Assistant Director*; Susan Gregg Gilmore, *Fiction Faculty*; Jesse Graves, *Poetry Faculty*; Christopher Martin, *Creative Non-Fiction Faculty*; Belinda Smith, *Lyrics Faculty*; Wendy Dinwiddie, *Counselor*; Joseph Ellison, *Counselor*; Brittany Gray, *Counselor*; Brittany Skidmore, *Counselor*.

Thank you to the financial supporters of this program. Without your generosity many of these students would not be able to attend the AYWW. Your gifts have an impact on each of these students during the workshop and beyond. Thank you!

The writing included in this anthology is the result of one week at the Appalachian Young Writers' Workshop and may therefore still be works in progress or excerpts.

The Appalachian Young Writers' Workshop is a seven-day residential writing workshop providing 9th-12th graders the opportunity to explore the craft of creative writing, learning from the region's foremost writers.

The AYWW is a collaborative program of Lincoln Memorial University and Humanities Tennessee. For more information visit

www.HumanitiesTennessee.org.