

Summer 2007
Teen Writing Contest Winners

Winning Poem “Dream Stole a Day”

Wining Short Story “The Raven and the Road”

Short Story –Second Place-
“WAR HAUNTS THE HEART”

Short Story-Third Place-“Untitled”

Short Story (first chapter of a novel in progress)
-Honorable Mention- “Mindless, Reckless”

Winning Poem

“Dream Stole a Day”

by Christine, age 16, Grade 12

Dream stole a day to take with him
And keep it for the night;
It let alone the sparkling stars
But lent a dusty light.
A labyrinth, spun out of mists,
Kept me imprisoned there,
Sustaining me with wondrous sights
And phosphorescent air.
Another night, to live and dream:
Delirium's Desire...
A Destiny yet unfulfilled
But this celestial fire
Is mine, safe from Destruction's reach
'Til Death's dark path I take--
So I Delight now, when I sleep,
Despair when I awake.

Winning Short Story

“The Raven and the Road”

By Glenn, age 17, grade 12

It was a dark and dismal night with rain pouring down and lightning streaking across the sky above my head as I walked along the middle of the dark and dirty road towards a destination unknown to even me. I couldn't remember where I had come from or where I was. I couldn't remember who I was, or even what I had done to get here. I couldn't remember anything about the past few days, but I still walked on. I questioned myself: who was I and where did I come from? The world around me was almost translucent, probably a trick of the eye.

The road I walked was in the middle of what seemed to be a desert, but the fierce storm raged on, contradicting the scenery. The sand around me seemed dead, no plants or any sort of life. The barren wasteland was broken only by tall spires of stone, like teeth of a large beast, with the road as its tongue. Something seemed wrong with this place, but I couldn't figure it out. My mind seemed clouded, and my thoughts only came as flashes of images in my head. I just kept walking on with no conceivable purpose or destination.

I walked for what seemed like generations, but was probably only a few hours. I then saw something ahead of me, a distant blur that stood out of the already blur horizon. I walked toward it, hoping it was a person. However, as I walked closer, I noticed it wasn't a person, but a bird: a raven. It was on the carcass of an animal; a deer. However, as I inched closer, I noticed that the deer was alive and the raven was picking at the poor animal's exposed ribs. The animal whined and cried, trying to fight off the bird. I ran

over to the dying animal and threw a rock at the raven. It hit the bird and the bird flew off, screeching bloody murder into the darkness. I knelt down next to the animal and examined its wound. Its ribs were exposed and flesh was scattered everywhere. As I looked at the wound, I noticed something that wasn't quite right, the wound wasn't bleeding. The animal cried and whined, but it did not bleed! What kind of place was this? No animal gets injured and doesn't bleed, not any living one anyway. Then, I heard a loud screeching behind me and turned around. Behind me, coming out of the blurry darkness, came a cloud of ravens, and they were heading straight towards me! As the lightning streaked across the sky, it illuminated the evil crowd as it descended upon the road. Their eyes were as red as blood and their feathers ruffled. I abandoned the dying deer and ran in the opposite direction of the ravens. The ravens flew with unnatural speed, as if they were the birds of hell, and this was their domain. I ran down the road as fast as I could, but I stumbled and fell into a puddle. It was the feelings of cold, wetness, and pain came flooding back. The ravens were on me almost instantly after I fell. I screamed as they pecked and picked apart my body, devouring me alive. Where flesh was ripped, new flesh grew instantly to feed the hungry birds. It was then that my memories trickled back inside of me, memories of a horrific event passed. I then realized what this place was, and I felt unimaginable amounts of fear rise from deep inside me. I realized that I was dead, and this was hell. The End

Short Story –Second Place

“WAR HAUNTS THE HEART”

By Stephanie, age 13, grade 9

WAR HAUNTS THE HEART

Have you ever experienced something so terrible that try as you might, you can't forget it? I'll have you know that such a thing happened to me. I remember as though it was yesterday. Oh, how terrified I felt when Captain Jones was suddenly standing in front of me. He was from the Civil War and I was experiencing WW2. Perhaps you would like to hear the whole story? My name is Linda and this is my horrifying epiphany.

1

A Bloody Beginning

It was the middle of the night and I had just awoken from one of my nightmares when I saw a ghost standing in front of me. Naturally, I got scared but after a few minutes I asked him who he was and his response was “Captain Jones of the Army of the Potomac. Fighter at the battle of Antietam.” “My name is Linda” I replied “and my father is a soldier in World War 2” The captain stared at me blankly for a few moments then said “Are you ready to go?” Confused, I asked “GO where?” [Another blank look], “To battle, Of course!” was all he said. Seconds later I hear canyons rumbling, men shouting, and guns going off. “Where are we?” I yelled through all the noise. “The battle of Antietam, September 17, 1862” the Capt. looked ready to fight, never taking his eyes off the field. I quickly tried to relieve myself from shock. We had gone back in time. But how? I didn't waste time thinking about that because a cannonball was coming right at us. “Run! as fast as you can, you must hide!” Capt. Jones hollered. I quickly found refuge in a boulder that shielded my entire body. For what seemed like an eternity the guns and canyons went off. Then the armies retreated and night fell. I thought for sure I was alone in time where I didn't belong.

2

The night on the field

The night was unbearable! I kept thinking that I was going to be discovered and would never be able to return to 1942. As the night dragged on I lay there sleepless like a newborn and full of fear. Tried as I did, the sleep did not come. It didn't matter because I couldn't due to the fear of discovery that overpowered me. Little did I know that it was going to get worse. I woke to the overwhelming stench of dead bodies and voices in the distance. Cautiously, I looked up and saw two black men walking along the field, kicking the bodies as they went. The men buried all the dead bodies and helped those who woke from unconsciousness with their wounds. As they came closer to my hiding place my fear of discovery grew. They stopped suddenly inches away, and one of the men said “There ain't no more down here Zed, let's go.” Zed replied with a nod and they headed back in the other direction. For that one moment, relief spread over me. I decided right then and there that I had to get back to Lancaster VA, 1942 (where I came from). I knew

it would be a long way (after all I was in Maryland at the time). My father once told me that I was so hard headed that once I made up my mind about something; that was the end of it. This was one of those times.

3

Attempting to go home

I spent as much time as possible planning the way home. First I had to look like I belonged to the time period so I regretfully stole a dress off a clothes line and hid my clothes in a barrel not much farther away. I was going around the town asking people if they knew where I could find a map of the United States and all I got were blank stares. I realized my mistake instantly. ‘Of course,’ I thought ‘during the Civil War the country was divided because the Southern states seceded.’ With this knowledge, I asked a woman where I can find a mapmaker (I dared not ask about the Confederacy to a northerner). She said there was a map maker who owned a shop on DeWitty St. I found a horse drawn carriage and the driver agreed to take me to my destination. Finding the shop took a little longer because there were so many on that street. After a while I found ‘*DéMonte the mapmaker*’. Inside, there were maps of all sorts. I was interrupted by a tall scrawny man who, to my guess, might have been Monsieur Démonte. “Can I help you miss?” his voice came out in a raspy tone. “Yes, I was wondering if you had any maps of the Confederacy, I am on my way to visit a cousin in Virginia” I tried to sound as normal as possible, the man could scare even Hitler. “Yes, I do believe I have a few.” I shuddered at his voice. “Follow me”. The man led me behind a curtain that hid even more ornate maps then in the front. “Here we are,” I jumped, seeming to have forgotten he was there. “This will take you all around the Southern states.” “Thank you very much sir.” I was about to turn and leave with the map when he said “You are going to pay for that, right?” I stopped. Pay for the map? With what? I had no money on me and I knew the man wasn’t going to give it up for free. I spotted a bank not too far down the road and had an idea. “I’ll be right back” I said, putting the map down and quickly ran out of the store. The bank teller gave me a little more trouble then I’d expected but eventually he gave me some money. \$50, that was bound to be more then enough considering the fact that it was 1862 not 1942. I ran back to the mapmaker and surely enough, there was plenty left over. With the map in hand I decided to spend the rest of the money on food and shelter. All I got for the money was 2 loaves of bread and 1/2 a pound of dried up beef. I roamed around looking at the scenery while at the same time looking for a place to hide. Money was very scarce and I didn’t think it’d be enough to stay at a decent hotel so I kept it. Soon enough night fell and I made my bed out of the ground behind an abandoned shed. The thought of the adventures ahead kept me awake but also enabled me to sleep.

4

So the adventure begins

I spent the next day planning my route to Lancaster. The best way was to first get out of Boonsboro (a city not far from Antietam Creek). Looking at the map, it seemed going south would take me right into Arlington, Virginia. There, it would be about a month’s journey to Lancaster. Confident that my plan would work, I drifted into sleep.

5
Battle Strikes (Again)

It was the middle of December and I had been traveling since September when it all happened again. I had just gotten out of Boonsboro and was entering Williamsport and people were running everywhere you looked. I stopped a man to ask him what was going on and he told me “They’re heading for Fredericksburg to battle!” Once again my journey was interrupted by the war. I decided to stay in Williamsport for the winter and continue my journey in April. All seemed well, at that time.

6
Heading towards home

It was a clear day, the day I decided to restart my journey. I had kept up with the war news and nothing major occurred. I started off on my journey early in the morning so I wouldn’t run into anyone. By midday I was crossing the Potomac River into what we know today as West Virginia. It would be approximately another week until I see the border of Virginia. Day after day I walked and I walked only stopping to eat and sleep. This continued for 3 more days. On the fourth, I was granted a miracle. It was around 3 o’clock in the afternoon and the sun was hotter than ever. Suddenly, out of the blue I saw what looked like a horse drawn carriage in the distance. Within minutes that carriage pulled right up to me. “Need some help miss?” the stranger’s voice sounded kind yet firm at the same time. “Yes, is there a train station anywhere down that way?” I pointed in the direction from which he came. “It’s about a 2 day’s journey by horse in the southeast direction.” I pondered that for a moment. ‘2 days by horse? Well, it would take longer on foot.’ “Can you take me there? I need to get to Richmond.” He seemed to take this into careful consideration. “That shan’t be a problem” and with that he helped me into the carriage and we were off. Stopping here and there for a leg stretch. We arrived at the station noon the next day.

7
At the station

I have never seen a train station before in my life and was amazed at how big it was. I paid the man all the money I had left, thanked him and set off into the station. Finding the train wasn’t that hard. I heard the conductor yell “All aboard for Richmond!” and followed the sound of his voice. Then I realized I didn’t have a ticket so I snuck into the baggage car and hid there. Home here I come!

8
Home Sweet Home

It only took a day to get to Richmond. I didn’t think it would be that fast. As soon as I got out of the baggage car, I went straight to the ticket window to find out if there was a train to Lancaster. The man at the window said it would leave at gate 3 in a half hour. That gave me plenty of time to freshen up and eat the last of the food I had. The clock struck quarter of twelve. I had just 15 minutes to find the train. I looked for the nearest gate to see if it was gate 3. It was gate 6. I was too far down so I walked off to the left to find the gate. Ten minutes later I was at gate 3. I snuck into the baggage cart once again and soon enough, the train was moving. I think about 8 or so minutes had past when I began to feel

sleepy. The last thing I remember was someone saying “Glad you survived?” and then I fell asleep. I woke up a minute later in my bed and I was dripping with sweat. The clock showed 2 o’clock in the morning. ‘Did I dream this?’. Then I looked down at me and realized I was wearing the dress I stole. I had traveled back in time to the Civil War and survived the Battle of Antietam (one of the bloodiest battles). I realized I couldn’t tell anyone and neither can you now that you know.

Promise? Good. My tale has ended.

Short Story-Third Place

“Untitled”

By Christian, age 16, grade 12

It all began 3 hours ago, I was the head of excavation at the museum of ancient history and had recently returned from a trip to New York. I was working late at the museum trying to research the artifacts I had found. The tools were archaic to say the least and looked like they may have been used for surgery long ago. My closest estimation would have been their last use was 1900 or so. In the current year 2120 finding stuff like this was almost impossible. What a find! I thought these surely would be put on exhibit.

That’s when I heard the buzzing noise. Not like the buzzing of a bee, It was louder more like the noise of one of those terribly outdated chainsaws people used over 100 years ago. The museum had been closed for over 4 hours. I thought surely everyone must have cleared out by then as I slowly crept toward the noise.

I followed the almost melodic tapping until I found myself at the entrance to the basement corridor. I slowly slinked down the rocky steps, ignoring the fact that the only source of light was 4 candles placed 9 ft. apart from each other and the single light bulb at the bottom. Finally as I reached the bottom step I saw the most horrific sight. The curator for the museum Ms. Dubois was carrying a male body towards a rustic robotic surgery table.

Ms. Dubois was around 45 and eccentric to say the least. Her husband had passed away due to heart attack only 3 months ago and she never had cried once. When someone would try to give their condolences to her she would only laugh and say the big lug would be back from market soon. She also had a tendency to start rambling about things for no reason. We would be in a meeting that could decide the future of the museum and she would start talking about the fact that her dog does not wear white after labor day. As I said, eccentric was most definitely the word. But still murder seemed extreme .

I crept slowly towards her as not to provoke the obviously mad woman. “Ms Dubois what is going on here? I said with a stutter. She turned and looked at me as if I was an answer to a problem she had. Why my boy, William! She paused for a moment then began speaking to me vehemently, Well are you going to just watch me or help me carry this thing!!

“What have you done to that poor man, I said with utter disgust“. She looked at me with a wry smile “ poor man, this is just my husband! He’s been asleep for quite a while but tonight we’re going to wake him up!”

I was slightly relieved to know that she had not killed him since her husband died of heart failure but it was becoming exceedingly obvious this woman belonged in a hospital with padded rooms.

I thought of my choice of words carefully then asked, How do you plan on waking a dead man? She looked at me as if I should have known the answer all along “ Why it starts with you, of course.... Well I had planned on choosing someone else but since you have already stumbled down here, you’ll have to do.”

That was all I needed to decide that I had to reach the authorities. I turned around and began bolting up the stairs, That was when I realized I had yet to uncover the buzzing noise, it had been going the entire time. At the top of the basement corridor where I had entered was an old tr-1 bot lurking in the shadows.

Tr-1 had been recalled from the market over 80 years ago. It was the 1st real for a y into robot technology. It would do anything within reason the owner told it. Unfortunately they were programmed well but encrypted badly. Hackers somehow breached the main security system in Tokyo. Within minutes every single Tr-1 went completely insane and countless people were injured. The robots were recalled immediately and the company that made them abolished. Our museum was one of the few that had special permission to even display the Tr-1. And now I had one of these homicidal bolt buckets staring me down like I was fresh meat.

Ms. Dubois slowly climbed the corridor, saying something along the lines of “I can help you only if you help me”. She showed me that she was remotely controlling the robot, I weighed my options and decided psycho curator would be a better choice then psycho robot.

That was my mistake.

Ms. Dubois said she would call off the Tr-1 if I would help her by moving her husband’s body to the examining slab. I shuttered to think of what I was doing. I dragged old man Dubois’s body onto the large metallic slab. He weighed more than I expected but I was used to lifting large amounts of weight, from my college football days.

She then told me to drink a vile of nasty green goop. As much as I would’ve liked to reject I was in no position to turn down her request. It tasted absolutely terrible like a mix of herbs and... well, nasty green goop.

“the only other thing I need from you is to be quiet” she said with wry devilish smile . “The vile you drank consisted of enough muscle relaxants and sleeping pills to numb an elephant you won’t know what’s going on until it’s all over!!”

I now realized what she was going to try to do and tried to escape past the robot again but my muscles wouldn’t function properly and I fell to the ground smashing my head on the floor. Either the blow was hard enough that I blacked out or the sleeping pills finally began to take effect, either way it was not good.

When I came to my mind felt numb like I had awoken from a long sleep but felt as though I hadn’t slept in weeks. I was attached to a surgical table by 2 leather straps. I saw that evil hag Dubois out of the corner of my eye She looked at me and began cackling. She sent the Tr-1 bot over to execute his heart transplant on me.

Even though I knew it couldn’t hear me I screamed my head off trying to stop the crazed robot from dissecting me. I thought maybe just maybe it would here me and stop.....No such luck.

I thought If only I could reach the scalpel. I inched closer to it with my hand, further and further until finally I had gotten grasp of it!

I cut the leather straps and dodged the Tr-1’s flailing arm. Ms Dubois tried to get me on the way out but I knocked her over and ran as fast as I could. In the background I heard her screaming something like “I just need your heart, my husband will be fine with that.” I felt bad for the raving mad lunatic, apparently she thought if she could get my heart she could revive her husband.

“That’s how it happened officer, I swear”. The officer turned to the door and said “Don’t worry we’ll get her the help she needs”. It was comforting know she would get the help she so rightly deserved.

Even though the ordeal was finally over I couldn’t help but think about what had happened. That’s when it finally occurred to me how important life is. Important enough that I fought with every fiber of my being to live. Important enough that Ms Dubois was willing to give up everything she had for her life to return to the way it was. And Important enough that one death, Mr. Dubois in this case, can profoundly effect so many lives. Life truly is an amazing thing.

Short Story -Honorable Mention

“Mindless, Reckless”

By Danielle, age 14, 9th Grade

Prologue

Soaring, I'm flying on an endless abyss of night. I'm traveling toward my new hometown, Boston. I look out the window to find myself staring at my own reflection. My brown hair is ruffled and the remains of my eye liner smudged across my tired brown eyes. My name, that I loathe, is Kylie Block. I'm your average teenager at 16 who doesn't know what to do with the rest of her life. Parents breathing down your back asking you when you're finally going to get a job. Speaking of which... My mom settled into a more comfortable position for sleeping in the seat beside me. My mother, Mrs. Block, is my friends' favorite chaperone on field trips. Everyone loves her including me, well, most of the time. Sometimes she's a great person to talk to and be with, but other times it's a nightmare. I don't really want to get into it though.

It was my mom's idea to bring me to Boston to live with my father for a while, but I would rather stay with her in Long Island. She is making me go because she thinks that it's a way that I can spend some precious "quality" time with him. Notice the air quotes. I'm not very excited. My eyes give it away. I've been crying for most of the trip.

Everyone else on the plane is asleep now. All of the cabin lights are permanently turned off for the passengers to rest. Restless, after drinking an energy drink, I know that I won't be able to fall asleep for a while. I look outside my passenger window again. This time I don't see my reflection staring back at me. Looking out of the window, I see the moon. It's beautiful. I don't usually stop to stare at the moon. It is a full moon tonight. I was floating above the clouds, at peace, but it certainly wasn't down below me.

Chapter One

Asher

This is the quietest it's ever been since I've been living in Boston, but it's pouring raining; something's wrong. I'm standing on my rooftop holding onto the railings as I glance into the distance of hills and streets. There's no light anywhere except the light of the full moon. I almost blend into the night with my long, hooded, black coat. If you didn't know before, I'm Asher. Asher Gallagher. I'm well known throughout the streets of Boston only for good reasons, of course. By day, I still have to go to school because I'm only 16. All the girls have crushes on me it seems, but I don't like any of them. They all act fake

which is a complete turnoff. Most of them are snobby anyway, and they completely melt right in front of you trying to get your attention. I get good grades; I am well liked by my teachers, and my best friend Joel Simmons is in all of my classes. But even Joel Simmons doesn't know what my most precious secret is. He will never know that by night I am like the living hell. I sneak out onto my rooftop every night, and I never get tired because I never have to sleep anymore. People may call my type a vampire. Not to worry, I don't diet on human's blood. I am the only one of my kind that I know of.

Being a vampire comes with advantages and many disadvantages. One advantage is that I can fly. I drift from rooftop to rooftop with a bird's eye view, or truly a bat's eye view. At night, I am on the hunt searching for blood. Luckily, I am never thirsty for blood during the daytime. I am immune to it, even in bloody Biology class. During the day, I can do normal things like go to school and go outside, even if the sun's out, and have a normal life. My friends get suspicious sometimes when I don't eat anything and they call me anorexic. I think that word is used too loosely anyway. It's the least out of my many problems. Some things that I can't get rid of during the day are my unbelievably cold temperature, my baring teeth (which nobody notices), my pale skin and my electric black hair. In contrast, every other member in my family has blond hair. Even my best friend Joel has blond hair. Now that I think of it, I'm not exactly sure where Joel is. He wasn't in school today. Joel told me he was sick on the phone, but he didn't sound entirely convincing. I better check on him before dawn since I have already quenched my thirst on some small animals.

Suddenly my attention is drawn to the street below me. There is another boy walking casually down the street. His features are carefully hidden beneath his long, hooded, black coat that closely resembles mine. I am suspicious about him. It seems that I've seen him before, perhaps, in a distant dream. I could tell from his walk. It didn't seem to be a walk, but as if he were floating, levitating.

Impossible.

He looked up to where I was standing. His nose down was all that was visible underneath his menacing hood. He smirked at me. This was too much of a coincidence. Could this be the vampire that changed me?

I glided down to the street below me and landed gracefully on the tips of my toes. Not surprised by my super natural being, the boy stopped as if waiting for me to approach. He smiled again with that same crooked smile as I came closer. This time his teeth caught my eye. They belonged to a vampire. He took off his hood to reveal electric black hair; just like mine. I can't help but notice many of the similarities between us.

"Greetings, my fellow friend," he murmured.

"I'm hardly your friend, I've never seen you before in my life," I said coolly.

"Oh, but can you be so sure of that?" he paused. "C'mon you must remember me. It's Axel Rhodes."

I shook my head.

"No? Don't you remember, I'm the one who gave you that painful scar on your left leg," he remarked.

I swallowed.

"No," I whispered under my breath. Realizing I did know him.

"Ah, you do remember," he laughed menacingly.

"What do you want?" I asked anxiously. "You've already taken my soul. What else could you possibly want from me?"

"Forget your soul; I've already taken someone very dear to you. Aren't you worried about him?" he remarked.

Underneath his enormous black coat another pale body appeared beside him obviously weak from pain. Joel.

"Joel! What did you do to him? Is he..." I stopped in mid-sentence afraid to speak the unspeakable; the unthinkable. Joel was clearly going through something that I had long ago. His eyes out of focus as if he's lost his heart, or worse; his soul. I couldn't imagine the terrible pain that was too painful to feel. The pain is numbing his nerves as the venom courses through his limp body. I would have never wanted this life forced upon my best friend, especially, not my best friend.

"Why, why would you do this to him?" I cried.

"Isn't it obvious? It's my nature to do such things as this, and it should be your nature as well. Don't you see yet? You're a vampire; a human-blood sucking vampire. You should be like the rest of our kind, but you're not," he shook his head as if he was banishing some disturbing idea from his thoughts.

His last words lingered in my mind. Well, I don't suck human blood because I have been fighting temptation. It's not that I'm not tempted every once in a while!

His words breaking a train of thought, "Asher, I'm warning you. You can't hold off your temptations for long," he ends triumphantly. He drops Joel on the ground and disappears into thin air. Joel is silent, but he is still pale. I slip into his house quietly and lay him on his bed pulling the covers over him. He will be fine in a few days I tell myself. I slip back out his front door. No one notices or hears me because I can travel at the speed of light.

The streets are quiet again for a moment, but only for a moment. I look up to the dark sky. A plane is passing over me on its way to Logan airport preparing to land. As the plane touches down, it seems as if Boston comes back to life. Boston is glowing again with several cars' lights and light coming from the shops and houses' windows and doors. It is dawn.