



The Scribe



Fall 2011

Nativity of Our Lord School

Volume 16

A MEMOIR OF THE SEA

The ocean just has time to lick my toes before the greedy hands of the tide grasps it and pulls it back to open sea. The foam etches an artful design on the wet, clingy sand. I watch as the water lures sea grass out into deeper ocean. I continue moseying along the beach, avoiding the jellyfish and man-of-wars the ocean has spit upon the sand. The waves wash on shore, then follow the current away. The sand is a hot desert beneath my feet, the ocean a cool oasis to my right, and the sky a brilliant blue prairie of opportunity above me. It's calming here. With the sand, ocean, and sky, I have everything I need. Though I know I'm not here forever, and I'll soon be leaving, something tells me that somewhere inside me, the ocean will always flow, waiting for me to wade in again.

By Colleen Scallen Grade 8

SPREAD MY FINS AND DIVE

I stand at the ocean's edge
The wind throws my hair in my face
The gulls scream in a never-ending chorus
The freezing water curls over my feet
I take five cold steps into the water
Then an icy blue wave rolls toward me
It's tipped with sea foam like sugary vanilla frosting
I dive under the wave like a slippery seal
Twisting through the salty ocean
Sliding along the wet, grainy sand on the bottom
Then I roll on my back and float on top of the water
Like an otter on a hot summer's day
I dive back under, and I'm a seal spiraling through the water
Some people might say they spread their wings and fly
But I say I spread my fins and dive.



By Clare Fitzpatrick Grade 6

My inspiration was last year's spring break trip to Mexico.

WELCOME BACK TO THE SCRIBE

As we enter our sixth year of publishing *The Scribe*, we are pleased to present this 16th volume. As always, the mission of this literary magazine is to present the best in written work of students in grades 4-8. An editorial board of eight teachers chooses the writing for each edition (writers are anonymous to our board). We select pieces that reflect the values of Nativity School while presenting models of high quality writing. We are proud of our writers and know you will be, too.

PROJECT HOME

I knew about homelessness before I went to Project Home but never really paid attention to it. I never realized that homelessness is all around us, right here in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Last year when I opened the door to the basement of St. Mark's School, a kind looking woman rushed over to greet us, "Welcome to Project Home, are you the Lairds?"

"Yes," I replied as I took a look around. There were five tables set up, a corner with toys in it, a very old TV set, and some squishy, worn chairs. As the woman showed us to the back, I saw the sleeping quarters. Each "bedroom" was separated by a cardboard wall or a hanging sheet.

"Your job is to play with the children and keep them active and happy," the woman informed my brothers and sister and me.

"Ok, great," I thought to myself, "just like babysitting." As the families arrived and the kids warmed up to me, I was kept very busy. I ran around outside on the playground, played board games, and colored pictures. I was astonished at how energetic these kids were. They were so excited and thrilled to be with us, even though I was a complete stranger to them.

As some of the girls and I colored, one of them leaned over towards my sister and asked, "So what shelter are you from?"

I was amazed at what I had heard. Some of these children had never had a home, or they didn't remember it. Some have bounced from shelter to shelter their whole lives. There was a baby who was being raised by a single father. Everything about their world was different than mine.

When it was time to leave, I gave them big hugs.

A few days later, I was driving with my mom on the interstate and I saw a man with a sign saying he was homeless and needed help; I thought of the kids from the St. Mark's shelter. It was then that I realized that there are people all over America and the world who are in the same situation. Kids, my age, are being affected by homelessness; how lucky I am to have a mother and a father and a warm bed to return to every night. So I hope nobody takes that for granted, because I did before I went to Project Home.

By Gussie Laird Grade 7

I have worked at Project Home for the past three years.



WILLOW TREE

Thoughts flit through my head,
slumped here against a willow tree.

I almost drift in slumber,
sitting in the shade it sheds.

The elegant branches sway
as the gentle breeze blows.

I sketch its branches
in the colorful dusk sky.

The clouds outlined in black
move ever so gracefully in the wind.

It feels perfect,
as the calm surrounds me.

By Anthony Dahdah Grade 5
*The willow tree in my front yard was
always a calm place for me, so that's
what inspired me to write about it.*

THE SCRIBE

Her fingers fly
across the keys
And poetic statements
Are spat on a blank
white page
Her thoughts are threaded
Into five great stanzas
With a click of a button
And a chug of a machine
Her words are **bold** in
big, black type
on a clean slab of tree
And that slab of tree passed from hand to hand
Until it landed with a *thunk* on a
hardwood table
Then, behind locked doors
Decisions are made
That no one knows
a thing about
Until the day
when the newsletter comes
And her heart leaps up and down
like a thermometer
in May
And she sees the glossy font
And holds the print in her trembling palms
Her print
and knows
She's a scribe

By Colleen Scallen Grade 8

LEAF

Red, golden amber
Written out on nature's paper.
Slowly drifting down to the
cold
cruel
ground.
A whole sunset
printed on a leaf.



By Wini Bettenburg Grade 4

*This was an assignment for school, but it
wasn't difficult for me because I read SO much.*

MY BEAR

His eyes are black,
His nose is bright.
He's soft and cozy to
sleep with at night.
His eyes are dirty,
His nose is bare,
But he's still mine.
My little, brown bear.



By Claire Rachac Grade 4

MY FIRST DAY

I walked up a boring hill holding onto my mom's clammy hand. I was nervous; my breath seemed trapped in my lungs. We finally reached a small meadow with a school hidden behind the trees.

Our Lady of Good Counsel: School for Girls (aka Johnstown) looked like a juvenile prison. The red bricks had changed to an ugly blackish brown. The walls were painted over in different shades of grey due to vandalism. Outside, all the girls were in crowded lines. They all had colorful headbands and black sweatshirts. Everyone in the cement yard was running around and squealing with laughter, except me. I stood with my mom and dad behind all the chaos. I had never felt so alone.

When I got into the school, I could only hear my tennis shoes hitting the floor with a constant echo. It seemed to be just my mom and me walking down the longest corridor in the world. When we finally got to my classroom, I saw two girls with perfect plaits saying, "Wow! There's another new girl." I felt sick and wanted to bolt out the door back to Dublin Airport and take an airplane home. I was so mad at my dad for making us live there.

My teacher, Ms. Phealen, came right up to me and introduced herself with her hand stretched out, expecting me to introduce myself. I felt like a big, squishy marshmallow was stuck in between my teeth. Somehow I was able to get out, "My name is Lily." Then she said I could pick a seat. I was so confused and nervous, so I sat down next to one of the other "new girls." I put my backpack on the ground and sat uncomfortably in my seat. I peeked over at the girl who was sitting next to me. She looked almost as scared as I was.

After what seemed like forever, Ms. Phealen grabbed the attention of all 26 girls. Then she asked all the other new girls and me to stand up and say our names, a thing we like to do, and where we were from. After all four girls had gone, it was my turn. I said, "My name is Lily, and I like to swim."

"Tell them where you are from, Lily," Ms. Phealen ordered.

My mind emptied. Where was I from? Should I say St. Paul? Will they know where that is? After about 30 seconds I said, "The Twin Cities."

"Where's the Twin Cities?" Ms. Phealen asked, more for the benefit of the class.

"America," I said. The entire classroom immediately broke out in whispers, and if I

hadn't had their full attention before, I definitely had it now.

After about a week of being known as the American, girls stopped asking me if I was related to Hannah Montana and started asking if I wanted to play. I started to talk more and more in class. I quickly made friends and was starting to think that maybe moving to Ireland for a year wasn't quite so bad.

As months went on, I started saying stuff like "This is taking ages." And "I don't mind." But I gained more than just an Irish accent. I gained irreplaceable friendships. As a judgmental nine year old, Johnstown seemed like an ugly jail for innocent kids. I quickly discovered the people inside brightened up the entire building. It turned from boring and bland to a weirdly unique, dysfunctional, chaotic, charmingly cheerful home away from home.

By Lily O'Donnell Grade 7

In third grade, I had to move to Ireland for my dad's job.

THE TIME I WENT TO LONDON

One day in London,
I saw the famous Big Ben.
Then watched a great play
down in West End.

I went to Harrods,
the biggest toy store around,
and bought a bear for twenty-pounds.

I was ready to munch,
so I headed to lunch.
I ordered the fish n' chips.
When I finished, I licked my lips.

Next came Lady Di's Palace,
Kensington, of course
where there stood a statue
of a humongous horse.

I took the tube to the London Eye,
saw the city from the sky,
waved to the people a sad goodbye.

The time I went to London
I had so much fun,
I want to see Big Ben
all over again!

By Olivia Pope Grade 6

The winter I went to London I saw so many fascinating sights; I wanted to write about that very special place.



THE RUMOR VORTEX

Swirling, it approaches
Upon friendships, it encroaches
Its alluring twists are fatal
Avoid it if you're able
But no one can stay away
This
is the Rumor Vortex.

Its grip is tight and deathly
It feeds on all that's unhealthy
Like gossip, lies, and scandals
This
is the Rumor Vortex.

It hurts and betrays, shocks and stuns
Stings and bites and burns and shuns
It changes and warps and alters and bends
Its nasty treatments have no end
This
is the Rumor Vortex.

Why, you ask, do we get sucked in?
Why do we let the Vortex win?
We're human, that's why
It's natural to buy the phony ploys it gives us
This
is the Rumor Vortex.

What's the cure?
Look around
At every sight and smell and sound
There's a two-letter word, wherever you go
That two-letter word would be NO.

NO.

It makes the gossip slow.

NO.

It helps the healing grow.

NO.

It makes the Vortex blow
In the opposite direction

This

is the answer.

By Colleen Scallen Grade 8

This piece was inspired by the effects rumors have had on friendships and the changes I want to see.



MESS!

The doors are slamming!
The books are panicking!
The trash can is burping!
The empty Coke bottle is slurping!
The colorful windows are singing!
The annoying alarm clock is ringing!
The dirty clothes are dancing!
The #2 pencils are prancing!
The chipped lost teeth are chattering!
The shoes are pitter-pattering!
The books are chatting!
The fresh paint is splattering!
The bed is jumping!
The hairbrush is slumping!
The light green sheets are huffing!
The pillows are puffing!
Oh please, oh please!
Won't you just do us all a favor,
and clean up your mess?

By Emma Hamilton Grade 5



SHADOW

A shadow creeping up on me, following my every
move.

Seeing what I do all day, listening, watching.

When I am doing my homework, it's there.

When I'm feeding my pet, it's still there.

Following, listening, watching.

Standing against the wall

When I get up, it moves,

It's then that I realize

The shadow is me.

By Nicholas Martinez Grade 5

I came up with this idea by thinking of common things you see in a day.

DARE I BE BRAVE

I bolted out the door with my boogie board in hand. The waves were larger than they had ever been. I sprinted to the ocean where my brother was waiting. I saw the first wave. It was massive. It had to be at least ten feet tall!

I felt the water, and it was as cold as ice. I could taste the salt in the air. I followed my brother into the ocean until the water was at my shoulders. I could feel the water being pulled back out to sea.

The gigantic waves came again. I was shocked at how big they were, and I felt tiny. I was frozen in place, just watching the waves come at me. I started to move back toward shore, one step after another, but it felt like I was going in slow motion. Then I felt the sandy shore and safety.

My brother saw me on shore and came over. He dared me to ride the biggest wave I could see. He said I would be a “chicken for life” if I did not accept the dare. I had to accept the dare to show him I was not little or afraid, or inferior to him. I remembered another time when I was four, and I was scared of a roller coaster. My brother was six, and he went on the roller coaster. He talked about that ride all day and how much fun it was to ride. I felt bad for not trying the roller coaster. He was always calling me scared and little, but not this time. This time I had to show him I was not little nor inferior.

I made my journey slowly back out into the water. It seemed like the waves had tripled in size, but I knew it was only my imagination. Then in the distance I saw a wave forming, and I knew it was going to be big. I went as far out as I could and still stand. I could see the wave getting larger and larger. Then I felt suddenly cold as a twenty-foot wave made its way towards me. Before I knew it, I was on top of the wave! I felt like the king of the world! But that feeling did not last long because the next thing I knew I was being thrown down face first by this giant wave. I smashed my head on the ocean floor. I finally came up for air and made my way to shore.

I knew that gigantic wave was way past my limits even before I went out in the ocean, but I had to attempt to catch it. My brother had a good laugh at me for failing, but thought I was brave for trying.

While I was still younger, I had proven I was brave and therefore not inferior nor afraid.

By Andy Wingerd

Grade 7



JUST A ROSE

A flower is a magical thing. But some people don't understand that. They pick a rose, take one look at it and say, “It's just a rose.” But if you look closer there is something magical under the surface.

Look at the colors. Different hues of red and pink all mixed together. Flecks of white splashed on the petals. Blood red, maroon, coral pink, and fuchsia blended together in a symphony of colors.

Look at the petals. Each one is different from the next. One dark, one light. One rounded, one pointed. Pointing in all different directions. Each one fighting to be the best, to be in the spotlight.

Look at the stems. One may have 15 thorns, another maybe only six. Each of the leaves is a different size and shape. Some stems are tall, reaching for the sky and their dreams. Others are shorter, not so ambitious.

Look anywhere for the magic. Under the petals. Maybe a caterpillar will be crawling there, or there might be little drops of water clinging to the leaves. But as long as you look, you can always find something to amaze you. And it shows that nothing is just what it is on the surface, and a rose isn't just a rose.

By Kerry Schneeman Grade 6

I wrote this poem for my dad for Father's Day based on a picture of a detailed rose I had drawn for him.



DID I EVER TELL YOU?

Did I ever tell you 'bout the time I fought a dragon?
Or found a new world that no one could imagine?
Did I ever tell you 'bout the time I met the queen?
Or discovered a new creature? Or rode a time machine?
Did I ever tell you 'bout the time I kissed a frog?
Or became a rock star? Or tamed a 3-ton dog?
Did I ever tell you 'bout the time I flew a rocket?
Or dug a hole to China? Or found a secret locket?
Did I ever tell you how much you mean to me?
Your gentle hand around my shoulder fits just like a key.



By Therese Mellum Grade 6

*I wanted to write a poem that reminded me of my sister
and about the stories we tell together.*

MEMORY

Do you remember this day?

There we were.

Standing.

I looked at you. You looked at me.

You nodded with a serious look on your face, just like earlier that day when we played Crazy Eights.

I knew it was time. We rushed forward, pushing our hair out of our faces and into the ice-cold ocean.

You felt the sand squelch under your feet and you giggled. I smiled back.

In the ocean we were only ants in a big neighborhood. We did not want to stay to admire it though. We were freezing. The wind was blowing furiously with a sound like the loud roar of a lion.

My toes tingled and then became numb with cold.

We rushed out of the water just as fast as we had gone in.

We were still catching our breath from the bitter cold ocean
when the sun peeked out from behind the clouds.

We wrapped our towels around us tightly like our mother's arms when they gave us warm, loving hugs, never wanting them to let go. I gave you a thumbs-up with a wide toothy grin and we ran back to our towels and our awaiting families.

By Mary McConville Grade 8

WINTER

For the weather is cold and the sun is not sunny
and all the noses are so very runny!
Some people think that winter is dreadful and long.
But you can have fun, just come join along.

Try making snowmen and baking.

You can even make shoveling a pleasure.
Just pretend you're an Eskimo counting each measure
or Santa Claus in deep, bad weather.

For winter is fun and now you can see,
so give it a try and get out there like ME!

By Ellie McConville Grade 4

HALLOWEEN

Every year, right before Thanksgiving,
Comes a day I love. The dead turn to living,
With ghosts and ghouls and witches a-plenty,
Pirates and cowboys and cats, so many.

Candy in baskets and buckets and bags,
Filled up to the brim and carried by hags.
Stay up 'til 9:30, then sorting the loot.
Owls swooping, soaring, and chirping "Hoot,hoot."

Costumes in a box, make-up down the drain.
Can't wait for Halloween to come again.

By Therese Mellum By Grade 6

MY SONG

I sit on the worn, goldenrod bench,
Open my tattered second-hand piano book.

Take a deep breath,
And close my eyes.

I find that feeling-
That harmonious feeling,
That exquisite feeling,
That feeling I always feel.

I play.

My fingertips lightly press the keys,
Slowly, but surely, they make their way,
From start to end, from top to bottom.

The melodic tune rings in my ears
Something I'll remember forever.

My fingertips spring along the chipped ebony and ivory keys
Faster, faster, they dance

Then slower and slower

As if moving through thickly flowing glutinous molasses
Softer, softer, and softer

I let go,
And fly away.

By Emma Hamilton Grade 5

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