

VAUGHAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

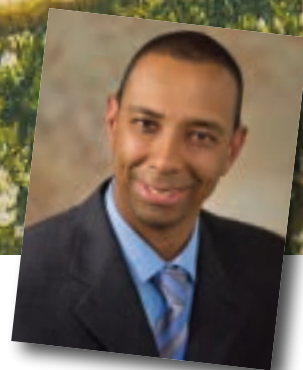
EARLY 4 HARVEST 2012

ARTISTS PHOTOGRAPHERS WRITERS VIDEOGRAPHERS



From the Chair,

Vaughan Public Library Board



For over 20 years, Vaughan Public Libraries' Early Harvest Competition has provided an excellent platform for teen artists in the City of Vaughan to showcase their skills, celebrate their creative accomplishments and recognize their contributions to the community. This year is no exception. On behalf of the Vaughan Public Library Board, it is with great pleasure that I introduce the winners of the 2012 Early Harvest Competition and invite the community to explore all winning entries featured in this magazine.

Over the years, the Competition has grown and evolved to continue to provide opportunities for young artists to express themselves in more dynamic ways. This year, we are very excited to announce the addition of Graphic Short Story to the writing category. This new addition allows artists to demonstrate both their storytelling and artistic skills by creating their own hand-drawn graphic short stories.

On behalf of the Competition organizers, I would like to extend a sincere thank you to our judges, Jennifer Harrison, Deborah Kerbel, Kean Soo, Mirella Tersigni, David West and Elana Wolff for their time and expertise in the selection of this year's winning entries. We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of our sponsors. Both Library Services Centre (LSC) and CVS Midwest Tape have been involved with the Competition for several years allowing it to grow and flourish. This year we are pleased to welcome the contribution of PowerStream Inc., as a Gold Sponsor of this year's Competition and Teen Award celebration dedicated to the terrific teens in Vaughan.

The Vaughan Public Library Board would like to thank all staff for their dedication and commitment in making the Competition such a success once again.

As always, VPL is dedicated to enrich, inspire and transform all members of the Vaughan community. We are proud to be able to create opportunities to showcase and recognize the talents of teen artists in our own community. As you browse through the pages of this magazine, please join me in recognizing the accomplishments of this year's winners. On behalf of the Board, I congratulate all the authors, photographers, artists, contributors, and participants who submitted entries this year. Please join me in applauding their creativity and talent.

Michael McKenzie
Chair, Vaughan Public Library Board



Vaughan Public Library Board:

Front Row (from L): Lorraine de Boer, Michael McKenzie (Chair), Grace Locilento.

Middle Row (from L): Suri Rosen, Rosanna DeFrancesca, Devender Sandhu (Vice-Chair), Marie Chiaromonte, Isabella Ferrara, Marilyn Iafrate.

Back Row (from L): Vivek Gupta, Gino Rosati, Margie Singleton (CEO), Steve Kerwin, Rocco Capone, Pradeep Puri, Michael Di Biase.

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Early Harvest is an annual competition of creative writing, drawing, painting, photography and video for teens 12 to 18 years of age who live or go to school in the City of Vaughan.

Chief Executive Officer
Margie Singleton

Early Harvest Team
Elaine Barr
Annesha Hutchinson-Cozier
John Pichette
Farida Shaikh
Jennifer Stephen
Elyse Trojman
Terri Watman
Karen Yang

Vaughan Public Libraries' Annual Early Harvest Competition is administered by the Vaughan Public Library Board.

Cover Artwork:
Rhea Lalsingh

Special thanks to our sponsors:

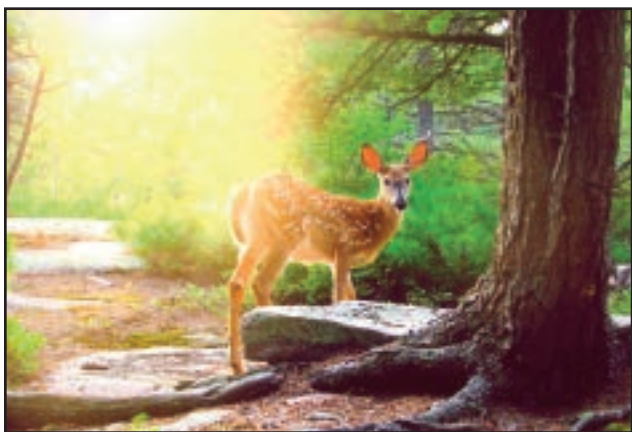


Photography

My World



1st PRIZE ~ Adelaine Bertoni, age 16



2nd PRIZE
Rebecca Idzerda, age 16



3rd PRIZE
Jardana Buis, age 18



Digitally
Manipulated

1st PRIZE ~ Nelson Kim, age 17



2nd PRIZE
Rhea Lalsingh, age 17



3rd PRIZE
Connie Le, age 15

Poetry

1st PRIZE

by Edmee Nataprawira, age 17

Observations of a Snow Globe Girl

I see her sometimes
peeking from behind the chipped paint curtains of her plastic figurine house
submerged in water,
encased in glass,
her ink dot eyes darting nervously and in much the same manner
as a grasshopper might dance to pass the time
if trapped inside an electric blender.

She knows how to recognize the signs.
She knows how to draw a forecast.

She has learned to bar her door and window
against the hardy tedium of solitary winter nights
when she knows I am most likely to add new fingerprints
to the oily clouds that stain the concavity of her sky
as I take her world in my hand and
tumble her against
her ceiling and
her walls

just so I might watch the white flakes

fall
without purpose
just for me.

I am sometimes reminded that my world may tumble, too.

‡ Poetry entries have been reproduced as submitted.

2nd PRIZE

by Aaron Sawczak, age 17

But Now

Aspiring fires and scaling laments
creep up and treat a testament
to be
as long as He may hear it,
and He always will,
a cry in the night from the weird and weary.

So the fugitive spirit of a crumbling moon
drifts, grips, and digs
the still-warm and lofty clouds,
and pulls
itself through the sky alone.
Wrapping itself in blankets of weather,
sapping the skies of water vapour.

Let it.
Let it tear the stars away,
clear the mind,
the mood of the last day
and leave nothing between you.

Speak freely where the atmosphere
once gave a bright blue
spark of interference,
tripping His words stepping down to you.;

Or so you claimed.
Was He not clear?

But now,
when you can only understand,
when it's no longer confused
or offhand,
but direct and sharp,
commanding,
take it.
Don't ask Him again.

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3rd PRIZE

by Benya Sutyanyong, age 13

Bound to Fate

The black eyes, staring blankly ahead, not registering the universe.
They swallowed the night,
Leaving holes in the thick blanket
Where light could leave a trail for lonely souls.
Bracing itself, its body found a ready position,
Its long legs tucked magnificently into the curves of its torso.
A cold wind blew through.
It rustled through the spindly strings of grass,
Each one striving to survive among the others,
Reaching up towards the darkness.
It found its target and its body shivered,
The frost finding its way through the layers of creamy chartreuse skin,
Allowing the air to tighten its grip on the creature.
Underneath the sky, the snow drifted.
Noting all of its surroundings;
The chipping, fading iron fence,
The prickly, naked branches fall left behind,
The nothingness its silent cries echoed off of.
Deciding, the grasshopper leaped.
Its body sliced through the air, piercing its eerie stillness with motion.
It never reached.
The cold, hard ground greeted it heartlessly.
This little piece of the world no longer belonged to the lone grasshopper.
It no longer belonged to the black eyes which stared ahead,
Not registering the universe.

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Meet the Judges



Video

Jennifer Harrison is a producer at Rogers TV, York Region's local community television station. She currently produces *Perspectives*, a weekly, live issues-based talk show and *Daytripper TV*, a photography-based show. Jennifer is also instrumental in producing a variety of special projects. Some of her most recent projects include the *Ontario Police Memorial Ceremony of Remembrance*, the *Character Community Awards Night* and the *York Regional Police Appreciation Dinner*. One of her first major projects was to introduce the *daytime* show to Rogers TV, York Region. The show premiered in 2004 and continues to be one of the flagship shows today.



Short Story

Deborah Kerbel is an author of primarily young adult fiction. Her novels include *Under the Moon*, *Lure*, *Mackenzie*, *Lost and Found*, and *Girl on the Other Side*. She has also co-authored the Quizmas series of family Christmas trivia books and her personal essay, *The Curtain*, is included in the young adult anthology, *Dear Bully: 70 Authors Tell Their Stories*. Deborah was honoured with a 2011 Vaughan R.A.V.E. Award in recognition of her work as a mentor and educator in the Literary Arts.



Graphic Short Story

Kean Soo is the creator of the graphic novel series *Jellaby*, and was an editor and regular contributor to the award-winning *FLIGHT* anthology series. Born in England and raised in Hong Kong, he currently resides in Toronto.



Sketching & Painting

Mirella Tersigni established A Stroke of Art – Progressive Art Studio in 1999, providing creative programs for youth that motivate self expression through the visual arts. She has created resourceful art workshops for both York Region and Toronto school boards, as well as visual art programs for organizations that provide services to individuals with exceptional abilities. Also known as a creative catalyst, Mirella engages communities to develop joint cultural initiatives through collaborative partnerships with diverse stakeholders. In 2009, she received the Vaughan R.A.V.E. Award for Educator/Mentor in the Visual Arts category. Mirella is a Fine Arts graduate of The Ontario College of Art & Design.



Photography

David West is the owner of West Photo and has been the principal photographer at his studio for the past 25 years. David has received numerous awards for his work, including twice winning Ontario Portrait Photographer of the Year. He has earned the prestigious Master of Photographic Arts Degree from the Professional Photographers of Canada, and received a Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce Business Achievement Award. David has also served as the Chair of the Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce. In 2010, David was the recipient of a Vaughan R.A.V.E. Award for Educator/Mentor for Visual Arts. David's studio, West Photo, is located at 120 Newkirk Road, Richmond Hill.



Poetry

Elana Wolff's poems have appeared in journals and anthologies in Canada, the U.K., and the U.S. She has published six books with Guernica Editions, including *You Speak to Me in Trees*, awarded the 2008 F.G. Bressani Prize for Poetry, and *Implicate Me*, a collection of short essays on individual poems by Toronto-area poets. Elana's suite of poems, "Meridian," took First Prize in the 2011 GritLit Writing Competition and a French translation of her selected poems is forthcoming with Noroît Editions of Quebec. She lives in the City of Vaughan, where she writes, edits, and facilitates therapeutic community art.

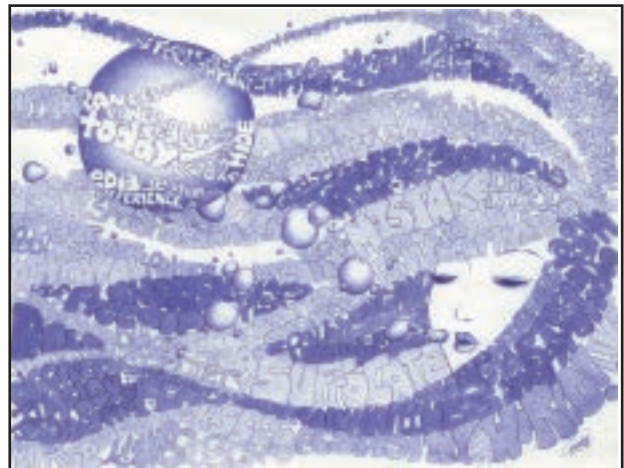
Sketching & Painting



1st PRIZE ~ Michelle Su, age 18

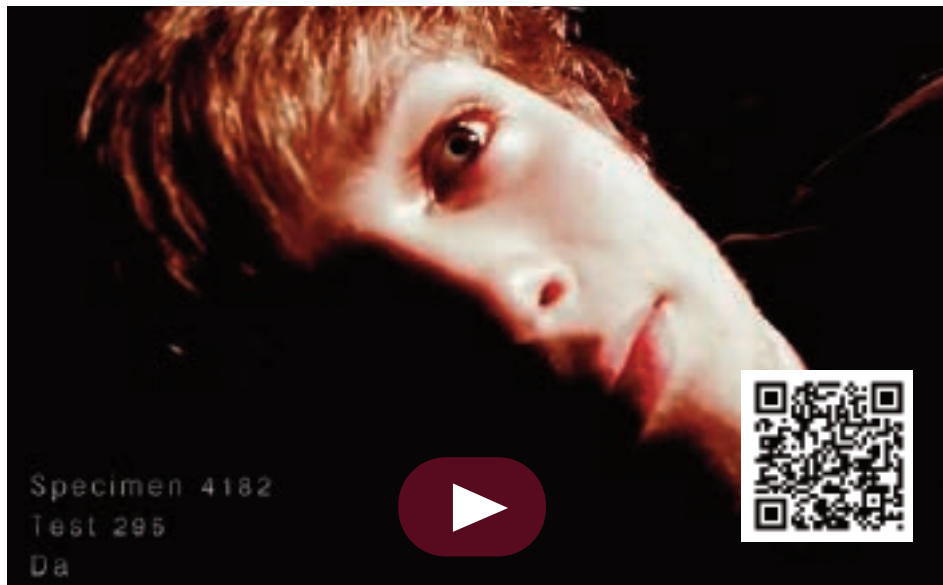


2nd PRIZE
Xue Leng, age 16



3rd PRIZE
Wendy Xue, age 16

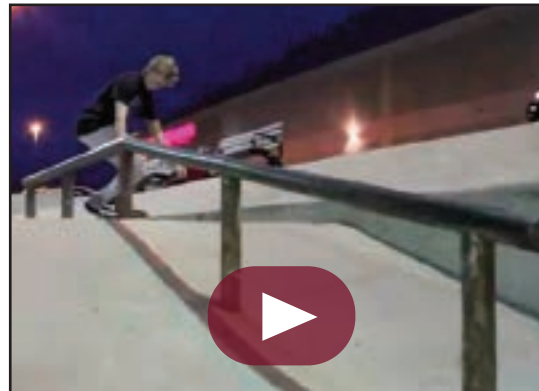
Video



1st PRIZE ~ Jenner Dekkema, age 17 & Brenton Huxtable, age 18
Specimen 4182



**2nd PRIZE ~ Evan Van Zeumeren, age 16
& Dean Albert Dieleman, age 17**
The First Snow



3rd PRIZE ~ Ryan Racanelli, age 17
Week in the Life - Skateboarding Trailer

Short Story

1st PRIZE

by Lauren Park, age 15

An Old Friend

Some of my happiest days were spent by the crackling fire, held by gentle, leathery hands that had been weathered by life, soothed by the sounds of summer rain and his lulling, gravelly voice that was wrought with emotion as he read aloud to a little girl. The old man had been kind to me, had loved me like a dear friend, and I was deeply saddened by his passing. I wasn't left alone for long, though, for the child blossomed like a delicate white flower and found me one day, lying on the floor of the musty attic.

"I remember you," Clarissa murmured, caressing me with a magnolia-white hand and enjoying the feel of soft velvet underneath her fingertips. Embarrassed as I was of being seen covered with dust, I was jubilant as her warmth brought me to life again. "Grandpa's favourite," she mused as she picked me up and carried me over to the armchair, where we spent the afternoon curled up together.

Ever since then, we went everywhere together. Clarissa never tired of me, knew my deepest secrets, and understood me better than anyone ever has. I accompanied her every day at the table, on the school bus, and in class, earning her a few detentions. One time, she read me in the pouring rain on her way home, laughing contentedly as she ran, and I still cherish the memory we made even though my wet pages curled and you can see the black smudges where my ink ran and blotted. I've been stained with marmalade and strawberry jam, and three warm tears fell on page eighty-one, but I'm proud of my disfigurements; they show that I've lived an exciting life and been loved dearly.

Things began to change when she got a boyfriend, a muscular, blue-eyed football player. *Don't leave me*, I lamented, sorrow coursing through every chapter, every intricately crafted sentence, every mesmerizing word – sorry, I try not to brag. *He isn't there for you like I am. He can't cheer you up when you're down by taking you to faraway lands and luscious kingdoms. He doesn't spend every night in your bed like I do, nor is he the last thing you see before you turn out the lights.* Still, her new life was a whirlwind of parties and jobs and dating, and then she settled down to start a family, hectic days in which there was no room for the finest of literature. One day, Clarissa gently set me down on the shelf where I was to remain for fifty-six years, and her soft footsteps grew fainter and fainter as the attic door creaked shut behind her.

Imagine someone forcing you to stand upright for fifty-six years! I've got quite the pain in my spine. We're all coated with a thick layer of dust, and I'm sandwiched between *Pride and Prejudice*, who is starting to smell, and *Gone With the Wind*, who –oh, the horrors!– is filled with dog-eared pages and the messy scrawl of a blue pen. What abuse! I'm no common library book, stamped and living with tens of thousands of others and traded from home to home as if all I'm worth is a quick read before I'm discarded. I'm the most elegant and luxurious of novels, a scrumptious delight passed down from generation to generation, intended to be a reader's best friend. Don't people appreciate a good book anymore?

The squeak of the attic door abruptly interrupts my grieving, and a young girl bounds into the dim, shabbily aged room. I practically ruffle my pages because she's the spitting image of Clarissa, with her alabaster skin and waist-length cornflower blonde ringlets. What on Earth are the fashions these days? She has on a sweater that keeps changing colours with little flashes – pink to lavender to blue to yellow and back again – and chunky bracelets covered with curious buttons and levers adorn her tiny wrists. Even as she walks, her eyes are glued to a tiny screen in the palm of her hand, hardly bigger than her thumbnail. She suddenly looks right at me, and then her eyes scan over all of us, crammed uncomfortably in the bookshelf, waiting expectantly to be chosen. Her button nose crinkles as she frowns. Well. I know we don't exactly look our best, but that isn't very polite.

Slowly, she begins to walk toward us. Pick me. Love me. Let me take you away. Yes! She strokes my velvet cover and closes her small fingers around me. Why is she looking at me with such confusion, though? Doesn't she know that it's rude to stare?

"Grandma!" she calls, and I listen to the sound of footsteps hobbling up the winding stairway to the attic, the woman's cane tapping each step as she ascends, for what seems like an eternity. "Look what I found! What are they?"

The old woman shuffles through the open door. She has deep wrinkles under her eyes and a curtain of white waves that tumbles down her back. For someone that's spent their whole life among 866 pages of eloquence, it's absurd that I suddenly can't string together a sentence.

"These are called books, honey," Clarissa explains, gesturing toward the rows of forlorn volumes. "They're full of stories. We read them all the time when I was your age." Her face begins to change as her gaze falls upon me, and her eyes begin to glisten. She relinquishes a shaking arm from her granddaughter, holding me tenderly in soft, wizened hands. "This was my favourite," she whispers, hugging me to her chest. She smells of powder and freshly baked bread. "Would you like to read it?"

"Yes, please! I've never read a story before!" the girl beams, clapping her hands with delight. It's been centuries since I was this excited. "Let's go download it!" She slams me shut so hard that it hurts, plops me down on the cold shelf, takes Clarissa's hand, and eagerly leads her away.

2nd PRIZE

by Sabrina Sukhdeo, age 15

The Ocean's Child

I never understood why the ocean loved me so, why she treated me with such care as if I was one of her rosy pearls. Maybe she knows how it's like to be so vast yet so unnoticed. Maybe she knows how it's like to be so precious yet so abused. Maybe she knows how it's like to be me...

The soft winds roll through my hair as I stand idly on the beach's shore. My feet slowly start to sink into the sand as sun-kissed waters splash my bare ankles. I stand there 'til dawn breaks through the clouds; she exhales as I breathe in.

I liked to come here often to forget—to fall into a sea of memories of which weren't my own. Sometimes, I thought that if I believed hard enough, the boundary line between what was mine and what wasn't would be blurred and I could finally go on. Was it stupid and childish? It could have been, but I've never questioned the way anything was before. I never questioned the jeers or glares or shoves. Just like the sea, there couldn't be any way to control it...

Crystal clear, I hear my name. *Jordan*. At this point, it isn't much of a surprise, but as the waves lap against my feet, the dissonant syllables echo in my head. *Jooordan*. A familiar harmony severing any threads of expectation. *Joooordan*. Their icy smiles sending shivers down my spine. *Jooooooooordan*. The strength in their presence disparaging mine.

The ocean was the only thing that was ever so perfect to me. It was the only thing that made sense to me, the only thing that never frightened me, and the only thing that ever embraced me whole-heartedly. And so I did the only logical thing.

I let her swallow me whole.

‡ Short story entries have been reproduced as submitted.

3rd PRIZE

by Jordi Klein, age 17

Tundra in Greenland

It was a typical morning for Arthur Fenwright. He was an old man, a retired man, and many days he liked to do nothing at all except to drink a cup of tea and read a book. Today, he had chosen a Dickens novel. Arthur was a fan of the classics.

Arthur's home was a small, simple cottage, situated on a set of cliffs that overlooked the wharf below. The cliffs were connected by a long, wide bridge suspended by thick metal wires. When they had first built it, largely in his absence, Arthur had thought that it was one of the most astonishing feats of engineering he'd ever seen.

The early morning sunlight was streaming in through the open window, accompanied by a salty breeze from the wharf. Arthur was sitting at his kitchen table, swirling his tea with a spoon and sipping it gently. It needed sugar. As he stood up to grab the sugar bowl from the windowsill, he noticed a figure standing on the edge of the bridge.

That is, standing past the support wires and metal bars, on the edge of a very very high bridge, staring downward contemplatively.

Arthur stood up completely, pushing his chair aside. He closed the book. He set the kettle on the stove to boil. He then double-knotted his bathrobe- wouldn't want it to fly open- and set out the door, padding along in his well-worn slippers.

"Excuse me," he called to the figure, which did not turn acknowledge his greeting. He continued to make his way towards the bridge, slowly. Age, time and the too-worn slippers made his approach appropriately cautious. "Pardon me," he said again, louder this time. As he neared, he could see that the figure was a woman, and that she couldn't have been a day over 25.

"Miss," Arthur was nearly panting. "Pardon me, but can I help you with anything?"

"No, I don't think you can," she said softly, looking down into the violent sea below.

"In that case, can I interest you in some tea?"

The girl glanced up, as if startled to see him there. Her eyes were a bright shade of tawny-gold.

"You're in your bathrobe," she stated.

"Yes," he replied simply. A pause, then:

"You don't even know me." The girl's brow furrowed.

"Please." They stared at each other for a long time. The girl scrutinized Arthur's face, searching. Arthur knew that look too well. "Just tea," he smiled warmly.

She considered his offer. He waited patiently. Finally, she answered. "Okay. Tea."

Wordlessly, they began the short trek back to Arthur's front porch. He did not look back to see if she was following; he knew she would be.

Once inside, Arthur pulled out a chair for his guest and dusted it off with a flourish. He began to clear the table, sweeping aside some bills, a prescription bottle, and one dog-eared novel by Charles Dickens. Finally, he picked up his teacup and dumped its stagnant contents. The kettle had just begun to boil, and he refilled his cup along with a second he had brought for his guest. Arthur sat it in front of her and sat down in his own chair. The girl watched him the whole time, her eyes like lampposts on a misty evening. She hadn't touched her tea.

He patiently sipped his own drink as he waited for her to talk. The clock above the mantle ticked the time away, but Arthur didn't care. He didn't have anywhere to be, and he was betting that this girl- whoever she was- didn't either.

Finally, she spoke. "Jennifer," she said apologetically.

"Arthur," Arthur said, extending his hand. Jennifer shook it and smiled.

Jennifer stared out the small window. From her vantage point, the bridge could not be seen, only a corner of a barren cliff. She fought the curiosity within and would not turn to look at Arthur's view.

"Have you ever seen the tundra in Greenland?" he asked. When the girl shook her head, he continued,

"I worked in the tundra many years ago. I had..." he paused. "Nowhere, nothing left. And I thought I didn't belong anywhere else.

"I thought the tundra would be a barren, desolate place utterly devoid of life, just rock and ice. But after a few months, spring came. To the tundra. Not only are there plants in the tundra, but there are flowers. There are rabbits and foxes and birds that nest on the ground. They're there. And they're *alive*. When I came back, I bought this house with my salary and I've lived here ever since."

"My whole life I wanted to go to medical school," Jennifer spoke softly. "Everything I've done up until now- the extra courses, the volunteering, the extra-curriculars... but it's not- *I'm*- not good enough. What am I supposed to do with myself?"

"You move on," he replied. "You try again next year. You find something else. You keep *living*, Jennifer. Because there is spring in the tundra, and it is amazing."

He slid a piece of paper across the table. "That's my address and phone number." Arthur almost didn't think she would take it, but she folded up the piece of paper and slid it into her pocket.

"Thank you. Really." A genuine smile crossed her face.

Sensing that their meeting was over, Jennifer began to walk to the door. He opened it for her. "And, before you go?"

She turned. He gestured to her still-full cup. "Thank you for indulging me."

Jennifer smiled. "I never did like tea." And with that, she was gone.

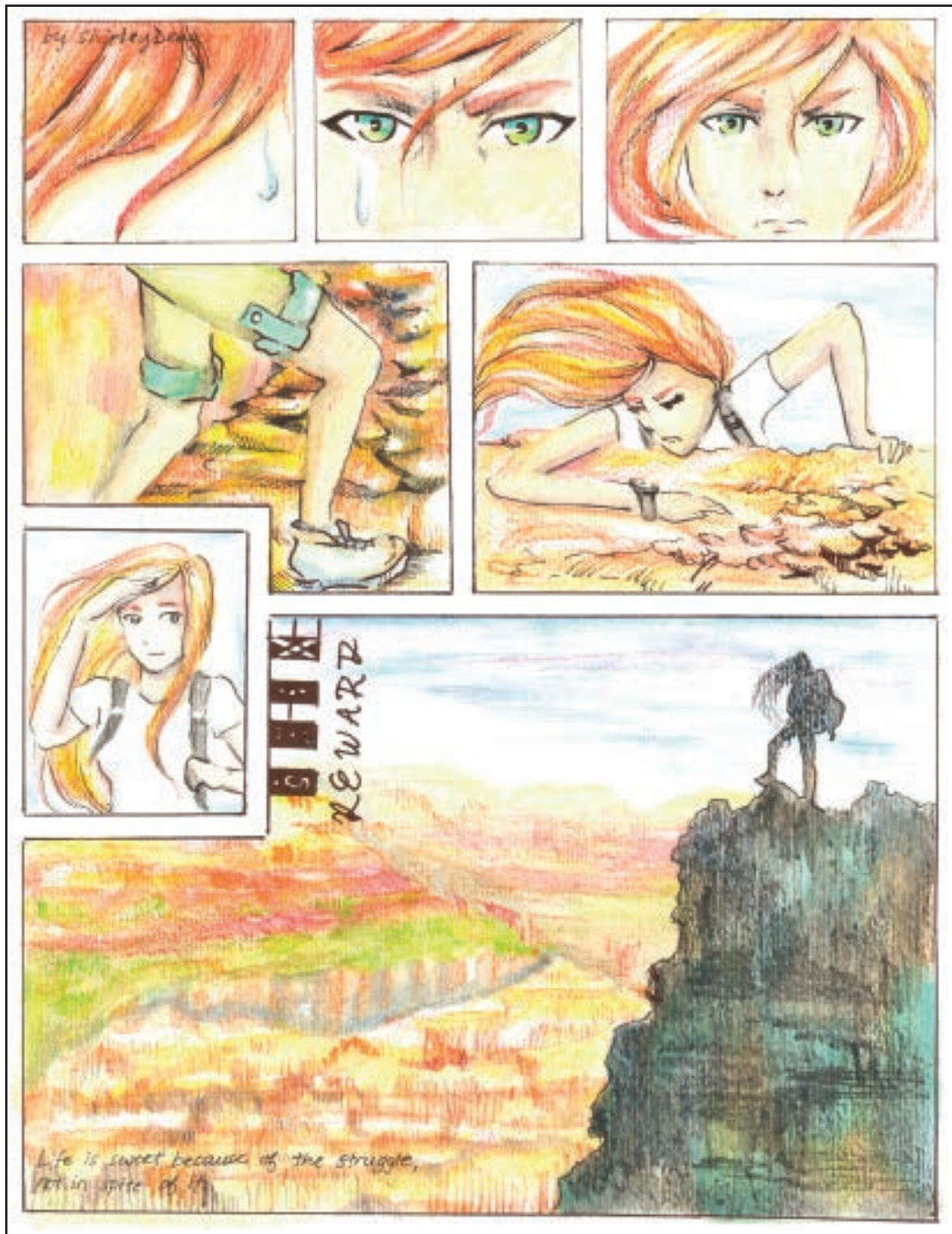
Several months later, Arthur was checking his mail when a small, unmarked envelope caught his attention. Inside was a delicate, icy-blue card, dotted with tiny painted flowers.

Thank you, the card read, for caring when nobody else did. Underneath that was a looping signature that said *Love, Jennifer*.

Arthur smiled and put it in his shoebox under the sink, along with all of the others.

‡ *Short story entries have been reproduced as submitted.*

Graphic Short Story



1st PRIZE ~ Shirley Deng, age 16
Reward



2nd PRIZE ~ Rebecca Idzerda, age 16
The Hunt



3rd PRIZE ~ Celine Lin, age 17
Being Myself...



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