

2017



Lakefly Writers Conference

Writing Contest Winners

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POETRY

1st Nocturne by Michelle Draves

Stepping into the night
I marvel,
As fireflies dance their ever-changing constellations,
At the small universe of my backyard.

I embrace the darkness.
Wrap its velvet cloak about my shoulders,
Sharing with the night
A little of my warmth.

Outside of time, I breathe
While minutes ... minutes ...
Minutes ... pass without notice and
Silence whispers into my soul.

Still air begins to cool as the
Quiet songs of distant creatures
Weave a melody
With space enough between the notes for dreaming.

And just before I turn to go,
I lift my hands
To fill the bowl of my arms with stars and
Press my fingerprint on the moon.

Author Biography:

Michelle Draves teaches third graders at Clay Lambertson Elementary, is on the leadership team of the Fox Valley Writing Project, and is looking forward to leading her sixth Young Writers' Camp this summer. She finds writing with young people inspiring because kids bring curiosity, abandon, and a fresh perspective to their work. The powerfully precise and compact nature of poetry makes it one of her favorite genres to write and read, but she also enjoys historical and contemporary fiction. Draves and her husband of almost thirty years have four adult children.

2nd An Arrow to the Knee by Dan Hansen

Since I set down my sword
I no longer hunt dragons
But I do round up Ponies

Since I ceased casting spells
I no longer transform shape
But I try to stay in shape

Since I abandoned alchemy
I no longer smelt gold
But I like to brulee custard

Since I hung up my shield
I no longer defend villages
But I hold our daughter close

Since I took that arrow
I no longer adventure online
But I love this World of Wifecraft

Author Biography:

Dan Hansen is a high school English teacher who lives with his wife, Becky, and their children in Elkhorn, Wisconsin. He has written poetry since his own high school days and, now that he is teaching a creative writing class, he is trying to lead by example in publishing some of that poetry. Dan and Becky are currently authoring a professional development text to help fellow English teachers teach poetry. They are also launching their Facebook page, The Poetry Professors, to facilitate much-needed discussions about poetry in our lives. In his spare time, Dan coaches debate/speech, and acts in community theater.



3rd Indian Joe by Roseann St. Aubin

I do not know his tribe
was he Menominee
was he Winnebago
or was he Stockbridge-Munsee
come up from Shawano.
Indian Joe
that was the name they gave him
when they sold him a sand farm in Oconto County.
The farm was his
but it fought him
60 acres of sand and scrub pine
boxed by gravel roads no one plowed
soil too poor for corn.
He hauled black muck from the pond
in a red wheel barrow dripping green water
hauled it to the kitchen garden on the hill.
He fed the muck to the sand to make it fertile
tossed algae to his boney chickens
who spilled from the lean-to
nothing but clucks and beaks and feathers.

And when he was gone
I do not know who it was
that came in the night
to wrap his body in burlap
to lay him out as gently as you lay a baby to sleep
to raise him high
on a birch wood scaffold.
Who was it who pounded the drum -
who pounded poles into the dirt at the edge of the
hopeless field -
who was it who assured that all would see him
cradled
loved
raised up to join the spirit race
to tempt crows
but deny coyotes -
with the skinny chickens dangling lifeless from the pallet
skinny chickens dangling limp and companionable -
who was it that lifted Indian Joe higher in death
than he was allowed in life.

Author Biography:

Roseanne St. Aubin is a freelance writer and media trainer who lives in Port Washington, Wisconsin. St. Aubin had distinguished careers in television journalism, city government and school public relations before retiring in 2012. Her work as a media trainer, assisting TV and radio professionals in bettering their performance skills, included an invitation in early 2016 to travel to the country of Bhutan to work with budding journalists in that Himalayan nation. Roseann St. Aubin was inducted into the Milwaukee Press Club's Hall of Fame in 2016 .

FLASH FICTION

1st Remembering Valentine Day by John H. Ebert

As we age together, my wife, Gladys, and I often chuckle about our periodic “senior moments.” We bump into someone we know in public and find that we are unable to come up with their names immediately. Instead of greeting them by name, we smile, wave, and say, “How are you doing?” All the while, our brains are trying to burn through the sludge to locate their names buried somewhere deep in our memory banks. A couple years ago, we learned to write out lists when we go grocery shopping as, inevitably, we would forget to purchase one or two necessary items (toilet paper comes to mind) and then would have to make a return trip to the store. However, now we often find ourselves at the grocery store searching for the list that we laboriously completed earlier that day only to find that we have forgotten it at home.

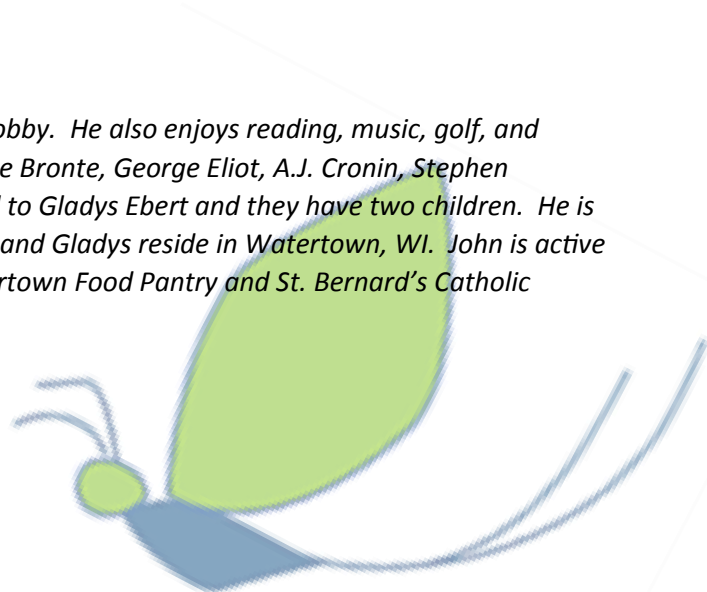
This past February, I looked on the calendar and saw the little red heart that marked February 14. I decided that I would buy a nice Valentine Day card for my bride of 34 years. When the day arrived, I had written out a list of three errands to run that day, including stops at the library, post office and cleaners. Driving downtown to do my errands, I knew I was forgetting something. As I clicked on the car radio, the announcer reminded his audience that today was Valentine Day. I now knew my additional errand was to stop at the gift shop to get Gladys a Valentine Day card. I wanted to write it down and add it to my list, but couldn’t very well do it while I was driving. Perhaps I would remember if I just kept repeating “Get Gladys a card, get Gladys a card.”

I finished my first three errands and was still repeating to myself, “Get Gladys a card,” when I arrived at a gift shop and selected a card for my wife. I smiled broadly as I paid the owner and headed home. Preparing to sign the card, I reread with pleasure the verse “To My Wonderful Wife – My love for you grows stronger with each passing day. Happy Birthday.” Happy Birthday?!

I looked again at the card to see if I could somehow alter it to make it a Valentine Day card. I sadly realized that my attempt to change the card would be quickly discovered. My only recourse was to go back to the store and buy a real Valentine Day card. I also wondered what to do with the birthday card that was five months early. How would I ever remember in July that I already had a birthday card for my wife? Maybe if I just kept repeating, “I’ve got Gladys a card, I’ve got Gladys a card..”

Author Biography:

John Ebert is a retired banker who enjoys creative writing as a hobby. He also enjoys reading, music, golf, and tennis. Some of his favorite authors are John Steinbeck, Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot, A.J. Cronin, Stephen Ambrose, David McCullough and James Michener. He is married to Gladys Ebert and they have two children. He is a graduate of St. Mary’s University in Winona, Minnesota. John and Gladys reside in Watertown, WI. John is active in his community through the Watertown Rotary Club, the Watertown Food Pantry and St. Bernard’s Catholic Church.



He waited in the entrance. The girl came by every so often.

“Can I get you to your table, Mr. Miller?”

“Not just yet, dear. She’ll be along any minute now.”

The young woman smiled sympathetically.

Looks to be about seventeen, Stuart Miller mused.

Betsy would arrive shortly and the girl would seat them. The couple would share winks over glasses of wine, laugh at the hostess’ youth, and beam at their own wisdom. They’d split a dessert, and canoodle long into the night. Until all of the patrons had retired. Until only the two of them remained. Just as they did every year.

This year was twenty-five. Silver. He fingered a small box in his pocket. Just the right size to hold just the right amount of silver. He’d present it to Betsy over dinner, at just the right time. When the music hit the right song, and as the tables around them began to clear. He’d take his time. It wasn’t every day one celebrated a twenty-fifth wedding anniversary.

It was just like Betsy to be late. She was probably fussing over her hair, trying to find the perfect pair of shoes, for the perfect dress. Stuart looked around the room. Couples bent over plates of food. Familiar smells of entrees wafted through the rows of tables. Everything was set up in the style of a banquet hall. Stuart felt momentarily disoriented. The dining area’s arrangement was different from years past. He scanned the rows of chairs and noticed a disappointing change in the clientele’s attire.

Why, where are their jackets, and ties, and dresses?

Stuart shifted uneasily, hoping Betsy wouldn’t be disappointed with the reservation. He made the same reservation for the same place, the same time, on every anniversary since their first. He hadn’t called ahead that night, and the restaurant had been booked solid. They were given a tiny table in the far corner, overlooking a window above the river that fell just below the restaurant. Ever since, Stuart asked for that same table, in that same corner, overlooking the water.

He peeked back over his shoulder at the door.

“Excuse me, Mr. Miller.”

The young woman, with the bright eyes and immaculately clean uniform, approached him again. She nudged his elbow and gestured him away from the entrance.

“Why don’t you sit at your table now?”

“She’ll be along any minute now,” Stuart repeated. “It’s our twenty-fifth.”

“Mr. Miller, you know Mrs. Miller isn’t coming to dinner.”

She led Stuart by the elbow, toward his favorite table in the back of the dining hall. They passed a group of residents. A friendly-eyed gentleman—pock-marked scalp shining through under what few wisps of hair he had left—called out to Stuart Miller.

“Hey Stu! What would it have been this year?”

Stuart Miller’s lucidity abruptly flashed the room back into focus. He forced a smile as the young nurse paused to indulge the old men.

“Fifty-six years,” Stuart replied.

Author Biography:

Megan Paske studied Journalism at UW Madison and was published in various newspapers as a columnist. Since then, her fiction has been featured in literary publications, including “Forge Journal” and “Riding Light Review.”

She is currently working on a memoir of her life with Bipolar Disorder. She uses her creativity as an outlet and as advocacy for mental illness and its place within the creative arts. She lives with her husband in Neenah, Wisconsin.

3rd The Last Inning by James R. Alf

The old man and the boy, sharing a death bed, the old man spent and withered and the boy he was many years before only a memory in the ancient mind, wanting a resolution of nagging, shameful failure.

The sounds he hears, in this last hour of life, are past and present mixed; a football is his cleated shoe digging in at home base for his biggest of all at-bats, in the game he lost long ago.

“Just relax, we’re right here.”

Relax? I’m responsible for the championship now. He clenches the bat so tight his hands tremble. The pitcher glares. It’s the dreaded Billy Noll, their nemesis. The boy raises his bat.

“Don’t be frightened. It’s normal at this stage for a person to thresh his arms,” says the nurse. A strange thing to say the batter thinks. Sure I’m scared.

“Your family is all here.”

Family watching. Can’t let them down. A door closes, the sound of a baseball in the catcher’s mitt. Ball one.

The last family member arrives. “You’re in time. It won’t be long.”

Strike one. Dang rising curve ball. The boy wants to dig in but his feet feel numb. Can’t let another one get by me.

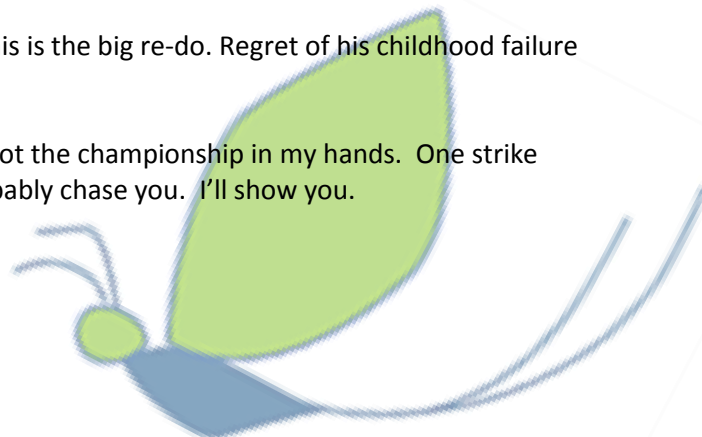
Bottom of the ninth, two behind, bases loaded. What a fix. This is the big re-do. Regret of his childhood failure burns.

“We’re here Dad.” I’m no Dad. I’m twelve years old and I’ve got the championship in my hands. One strike already. Billy Noll glares. I bet you’re a bully. All the girls probably chase you. I’ll show you.

“He wants to show us something.”

“He might be having visions. It’s not unusual.”

The wind up, the pitch.



Ball two. Now we're talkin.

"Notice the discoloration. The end is very near." The boy holds his breath. The fast ball next. The pitch. Here it comes. The smack of the bat on the ball.

"Geraldine! How can you pop gum at a time like this?"

Foul ball. Strike two. Can't strike out now. The team is counting on going to state. Gotta have two runs. Two balls, two strikes.

"You can talk to him. He can hear you even though his vision is gone."

The wind-up. He's going to try that high and outside. I won't fall for it.

The ball lands softly in the catcher's mitt. Ball three. Full count. He grips the bat.

"Hold my hand, Dad. What grip he has. Like a vise."

The pitcher's up against it, too. Now his fast ball, low and right down Main Street.

The pitch. Everything in slow motion now, the boy can just about count the stitches on the ball as it floats in. His swing is smooth, steady and strong.

Pop!

"Geraldine. For heaven's sake."

The ball rises and rises, the runners are in motion, a lifelong burden lifts as he rounds the bases.

The nurse places her stethoscope. "He's at peace now. Look at that smile. He must have seen something beautiful."

Author Biography:

James Alf is an old man who, as a teenage river ferry captain, dreamed of being a head rig sawyer in a lumber mill, a coast to coast driver of big rigs, and a writer, and has now achieved all three goals. He sawed enough lumber to build 10,000 houses and hauled sufficient merchandise to furnish them, hardly breaking a sweat, yet finds the task of filling a page with words arduous labor.

In retirement in Ear Claire Jim is a member of two writers groups and co-founder of the Chippewa Valley Local Authors, a group of 30 authors.

JEAN NELSON ESSAY

Theme: Three questions I'd ask my favorite author and why

1st

Circle of Fire
by Cyndy Irvine

"In my childhood old trappers and Indian traders . . . still came to visit around our fire." Mari Sandoz

Some years ago, maybe ten, maybe twelve, in conversation with a few other Western America history-lovers, the topic of the region's literature arose. Oh, you must read *Old Jules*, one of them said to me. Definitely, the others joined in. Within a few days I had completed the book handed me that evening – when I closed it shut and set it down I was sad that I'd reached its end. I felt that I'd actually peered through an open window onto the plains and people of the Nebraska frontier. I wanted to read more by my newly-found author and nowadays, when my eyes wander across my book shelves, I see an array of her novels and short story compilations that are some of my favorite writings.

The writer is Mari Sandoz – biographer, historian, novelist, chronicler of the American West. And respected authority on the culture of Native Americans, particularly the Sioux and the Cheyenne. She grew up in north-western Nebraska on a hardscrabble homestead close to an ancient crossing of the Niobrara River, "at the edge of the region they called the Indian Country," she wrote, "the final place of refuge for many of the old buffalo-hunting Indians, the old traders, trappers and general frontiersmen." Her grizzled and hot-tempered father was a homestead locator, trapper, guide, and horticulturist who called in the assorted passers-by to gather at his hearth. From their conversations, diverse in dialect and flavored with the parlance of the Plains, Sandoz heard the tales, the legends, and the accounts that are woven into her writings.

She never achieved the fame of other Western writers of her day, such as Willa Cather or Wallace Stegner. For many, her writings are too stark, too real and devoid of the romanticism anticipated in narratives of life in the West. She was meticulous as to details and unwilling to accommodate suggestions from editors (most of them living back East, to her annoyance) to enhance her fiction with falsities, neither minimizing nor magnifying. She was adamant about retaining the full spectrum of human behavior, from compassion to the cruelty that existed in the harsh environment of the Nebraska frontier. Yet for those who appreciate authenticity, her writings are rich in realism, burgeoning with wind-swept prairies, scarred old warriors and dusty buffalo trails. I'm reminded of the words of Edward Abbey, "There is a valley in the West where phantoms come to brood and mourn, pale phantoms dying of nostalgia and bitterness," words that evoke a sense of loss of what was, the fading away of previous magnificence, and the longing for what can no longer be.

Given the opportunity, I think of questions I would ask Mari Sandoz. But I'll never be so privileged, since she died decades ago in the 1960's. I can seek hints to possible answers in her writings, her interviews, and her correspondence. I can't call her on my phone (once I'd obtained her private number). Nor can I message her via Facebook, which I'm certain she would abhor, and she wouldn't maintain a private page anyway (although I do find online a Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center Facebook page). Nor can I travel cross-country to meet with her for an hour or two or three, in an old high-ceilinged historical library with dark leather chairs and creaking floors, where I think we would both feel comfortably at home – and where, honestly, I would like to situate myself for an entire weekend at least.

Because she is nowhere in particular, her body tied to no certain place, maybe her spirit drifts throughout the landscape she loved. Perhaps if I traveled to the Nebraska sand hills, sucked in deep the air, felt the summer sun on my face and arms, glimpsed the far horizon in the late afternoon – perhaps then I might discover some wispy hint of her answers to my questions. But for now, I choose to remain home. At writing-table and chair beside my kitchen window, immersed in my own landscape that I love. So I cast my questions for Mari Sandoz along the threads of

time, and across the chasm of earthly terrain that separates us.

First of all, I ask: What did you burn? What was lost that November evening in 1933 when you, an impoverished and discouraged young author, called together several friends and tossed some 70 of your manuscripts into a backyard washtub in Lincoln, Nebraska? And then torched them. And then watched them crackle in the flames. You later wrote that you had received hundreds of rejection letters from editors and publishers and had lost hope for publication of your writings. Knowing of your accumulation of historic documents, reminiscences of old timers, and copious notes taken as you traveled the countryside, I wonder what portion, if any, of this supportive information was deemed useless or irrelevant and was burned. I wish I had been there to salvage all the manuscripts, all the papers, that you carried out that evening, before they were torched, grab them from your clutch and rifle through them, I say, with an historian's greed. I would have taken charge of their safe-keeping so that none of them would ever be lost.

Next, I ask: After that fiery evening, how did you rise up and regain your determination? How did you allay the bitter disappointment of rejection? And when you again sat down, scrunched up your sleeves and put pencil to paper (three days later? several days later?), did you re-write some of what you had previously written? Did you seek new surroundings and begin new stories? Were you just unable to *not* continue writing? You felt so much teeming inside of you that you had to spill it onto the page? And from where did you wrench the resolve to resume the endless rounds of submitting? Were you inspired to persevere by previous authors who had suffered rejection but eventually succeeded? Did you know of Herman Melville's rejection letters for *Moby Dick* that included comments such as too long, very old-fashioned and – must it be about a whale? And perhaps you knew of a San Francisco editor's words to Rudyard Kipling: "I'm sorry . . . but you just don't know how to use the English language."

You did find success and literary recognition when *Old Jules* (spared the flames as it was in the hands of editors at that time), was accepted and published. This biographical portrait of your father, the book by which I was first introduced to you, is thought by many historians to be the definitive story of pioneer homesteading in the sand hills of Nebraska. Full of historical authenticity, it grew, you wrote, out of "the silent hours of listening behind the stove or the wood box, when it was assumed, of course, that I was asleep in bed." I read an excerpt by William Kittredge to the effect that *Old Jules* is one of the four great memoirs about life on the Plains of the American West. (Of the other three, I only recall "Teddy Blue" Abbot's *We Pointed Them North*, the colorful recollections of a Montana cowboy's adventures on the cattle trails.)

Finally, I ask: In your writings, did you ever soften any of the substance because it was absolutely too brutal? Did you ever surprise even yourself when you read a scene you had described on the page? Feel aghast at what you had inflicted on an innocent character? Your stories, always painfully honest, cut through to the heart and often display something of the "pathétique." Did you intentionally align yourself with Franz Kafka who wrote that a book must be "the axe for the frozen sea within us?"

I wince while reading your story, "The Smart Man," in which the abandoned husband Emil Karr inspects his newborn baby and seeing the evidence that another man is its father, grabs a straight-edge razor and holding the tiny webbed toes apart, slashes the paper-thin membranes between them. And then soothes the frightened baby into sleep at last, cradling him in the curve of his strong arm.

In your story, "The Vine," a young homesteading woman's fragile connection to sanity is the delicate glory vine unfurling outside the window of her dusty sod shack. I know, after reading only a few lines, that you will destroy that bit of green she is so passionately fond of. And hacked it is, by the hand of her distraught husband who discovers it has been secretly watered whilst there is scarcely a drop of the precious liquid remaining for him and his horses.

In "Bone Joe and the Smokin' Woman," a grubby bone-picker's eagerness and pitiful naiveté allow him to hope he might win the affection of a local rancher's daughter. I am certain, one page in, that the skinny smelly

buck-toothed bone man will be spurned by the haughty Hortense. And I want to jump in alongside him and protect him from the cruel fate your hand will assign him.

According to your sister, you “could not abide the ‘happy ever after’ formula . . . because [you] did not feel that life was like that, and to write in such a manner would be misleading to the readers.” You suffered hardship and brutality in your own life and perhaps the old wounds wept into your writings. Sometimes I wonder if you had ever borne children, if you could be so cruel to your readers. If motherhood would have softened your skin so that you couldn’t render such painful images on to the page.

I return to the vision of those crackling flames – watch the edges of crisp paper writhing as they surrender to their destruction. I see fragments drifting up with the smoke and fluttering down a few yards away, with scribbled words just visible inside blackened edges . . . bottomless drifts, wind-ruffled grass, sacred mountains, noble, primal, ancient.

I imagine my history-lover friends gathered beside me (those who told me of *Old Jules*) and I imagine all of us leaning forward to hear better Mari Sandoz answer . . . *what did you burn?* Ah, the circle of fire. Source of warmth, heart of gatherings for telling of long tales, of the hunt, the sacrifice, the victory. Yet source of ruin for the discards of a disillusioned writer.

Author Biography:

Cyndy Irvine earned a BS in nursing from the University of Texas-Austin, a BA in history from Texas Tech University and has completed writing classes from the University of Iowa-Iowa City and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her writing has appeared in American Journal of Nursing, American Profile, History, Texas Co-op Power, Wisconsin Magazine of History, and Wisconsin Trails. She lives in rural Portage County, Wisconsin, where, when not writing, she tends a large organic garden, runs, swims, and skis, counting the days until the Birkebeiner all year long.

2nd

Three Questions for John Updike by Jeffrey McAndrew

There is so much to ask my most admired author and the challenge to narrow the questions down to three seems like quite a herculean task. My author choice is the late John Updike, who in my opinion was, through his pen, the greatest weaver of words, painter of pictures and evoker of emotions. I have always marveled at how he could vividly describe seemingly mundane scenes with such clarity, magnificent detail, power and grace. Updike won the Pulitzer Prize and many other book awards during his lifetime. He was a witty wizard of the written word in my opinion. I am writing this essay in the present tense as if the author were alive today. In this reader’s heart, Updike is still very much alive.

My first question would be, “How do you create characters and their actions? Do you let the characters define themselves or are they planned out?” It would be so interesting to know the inner workings of your mind as the characters are being created. What leads to the exciting and highly moving narrative meant to energize the reader? What whims do the characters give in to and when do they maintain self-discipline? Is it kind of a stream of consciousness type process or is it more methodical based on predictable habits and/or patterns of thinking? I’m amazed by passages like the following. “We recently had a carpenter build a few things in our house in the country. It’s an old house, leaning away from the wind a little; its floors sag gently, like an old mattress. The carpenter turned his back on our tilting walls and took his vertical from a plumb line and his horizontal from a bubble level, and then went to work by the light of these absolutes. Fitting his planks into place took a lot of those long, irregular, oblique cuts with a rip saw that break an amateur’s heart.” Then there comes a time when you decide what the carpenter does next. I’d be interested in how you determine what role and actions the carpenter will have in the rest of your tale. To what extent do you diagram your characters, or do you let them come to life on

their own? William Faulkner once said that he would go wherever his characters will take him. Do you do the same or do you try to control what your characters do based on some preconceived criteria? Where would the pre-conceived criteria come from? Perhaps you interview your characters, to know them in depth before you have them engage in actions on the printed page.

The next question is about describing scenes. This is perhaps your greatest talent. Where do you find so many colorful ways to portray a scene? How do you do it so well do you think? I remember reading a passage from one of your novels where you describe a person waiting for an appointment at a doctor's office. It's such a mundane, everyday kind of scene, but you make it magically come to life. The scene is painted so brilliantly with broad strokes of descriptive color, with great insight and with a sublime form of grace. I just want to capture a sense of how this kind of scene unfolds for you. In the case of the doctor's office scene, I would guess that it has something to do with being aware of absolutely everything in the room, from the expression of the receptionist's face to the tick-tock of the clock on the wall, to the unique odor of the room.

From the story "Pigeon Feather" comes, "A barn, in a day, is a small night. The splinters of light between the dry shingles pierce the high roof like stars, and the rafters and crossbeams and built-in ladders seem, until your eyes adjust, as mysterious as the branches of a haunted forest. What light there was leaked through the shingles and the dirty glass windows at the far end and the small round holes, about as big as basketballs, high on the opposite stone side walls, under the ridge of the roof." You once said that we are the most alive when we are in love. As a writer, I believe you attempt to connect the reader with the blissful love you are enjoying when you are writing. The brilliance of your writing is surely, in large measure, the intentional blurring between sublime prose and poetry. Truly beautiful prose, as you have shown us, clearly contains a strong element of poetry which speaks between the lines. If I were to interview you, Mr. Updike, I would ask you how you master that canvas and make use of as many colors as possible to make scenes come alive. I would also be interested in how much research goes into creating your comprehensive descriptions. Are you ever worried about being too wordy? Do you write the scene, then research, or do you thoroughly research first then put the scene together?

The final question is about your sense of the concept of faith Mr. Updike. I would be interested in knowing how the concept of hope and faith motivate your writing. Mr. Updike, you were quoted as saying that you enjoyed attending Sunday church services on a semi-regular basis. You somewhat surprise me by not being more secular in your thoughts based on your novels, as are many of your contemporaries. Some very intelligent and award-winning writers, like Phillip Roth, are oriented toward free thinking, perhaps with an agnostic or atheist worldview. Roth wrote most openly about the dread of polio in one of his novels, seemingly without hope of a creator or higher power providing any solace or benevolent intervention. I was somewhat surprised that you, Mr. Updike, gave in a recent interview, some credence to intelligent design proponent Michael Behe's ideas in his controversial book "Darwin's Black Box". The work points to alleged gaps in evolutionary theory which may refute Darwin's well known findings. You have stated publicly that we shouldn't base our faith entirely on science, which can shift paradigms prejudicially. This would appear to enigmatically contradict the purely secular view. I've heard that a great sign of a genius is the ability to hold in one's mind two seemingly contrary thoughts at one time with a minimum of cognitive dissonance. Do you see yourself this way regarding the science versus faith debate? I would love for you to explain that. Mr. Updike, it appears as if you could believe, as singer/songwriter Leonard Cohen once stated, that "there is a crack in everything and that is how the light gets in." Through your descriptive magnificence, you were able to portray and dramatically illuminate in your many passages how poignantly beautiful and meaningful the spiritual life can be. Through your writing, we are able to benefit from a more colorful and perhaps more vivid glance at common human experience and the everyday travails of life.

I have carefully observed that it is through this very complex intellectual lens that you sometimes choose to gaze at subtle shades of the faith versus science debate. In the novel "In the Beauty of the Lilies," you quite eloquently write about a minister who has lost his faith and could not with good conscience continue serving the people, while following all the rules that religion requires. One would think that this is your atheism clearly and solemnly speaking through your prose. You are, however, as we mentioned earlier, a loyal member of your local Christian church. I would love to hear you expound on your thoughts concerning the importance of spirituality and the nature of man and how you are able to gracefully integrate those profoundly important ideas into the pages of your many novels.

You once said that you would like to be remembered as a writer who tried to find the beauty of American life through your prose, attempting to lift the ordinary into the eternal realm of art. Your writing has truly filled me with new inspirations, prompting profoundly different and wonderful ways to look at my life and the life of others. Thank you Mr. Updike.

Author Biography:

Jeffrey McAndrew is the author of two books, one non-fiction and one fiction. His first book, "Our Brown-Eyed Boy" (2003), helped families of special needs children, closely examining Jeff's family's unique struggle with the poignant challenges created by having an autistic son. Jeff's second book, "A Conscientious Life" (2011), is a fiction focusing on the subjects of autism, politics and religion. The Wisconsin author is also a singer/songwriter who released a music CD of original songs called "The Miracle Is Ours" in 2014. Jeff spent 19 years in radio news, winning many broadcasting awards for his news stories and news series.

3rd Questioning Lewis by Joyce Frohn

My favorite author is C.S. Lewis. He was one of the authors that set me on the road to fantasy. And as I grew older I found his theological and philosophical books to be a great comfort. The three questions that I would ask of C.S. Lewis are: Did you find the answers you were seeking when you wrote, "The Problem of Pain" after your wife's death? Is the Calormene who enters Aslan's kingdom in "The Last Battle" supposed to be Mohammed? And finally, did you intend for others to add to your work.

"The Problem of Pain" was C.S. Lewis's howl of pain after his beloved wife died. He had been sure that he was going to be a bachelor his whole life. Of course he had also been sure he would be an atheist his whole life. He married at 58 after exchanging letters with her for years, as detailed in his book, "Letters to an American Lady". When they finally married, a life long bachelor became a husband and stepfather to two American boys. When she died of cancer after only four years, he was devastated. As he and her boys tried to deal with the loss, he dealt with the problem the way a true writer deals with trauma. He wrote. The problem is that he could write about pain and try to understand why there was pain in the world but in his book he never found an end to the pain.

I want to know the answer to this question because I feel that if he could find the end of his pain maybe there is hope for me and my pain. I read his book and find it is the best intellectual, philosophical, theological answer to why there is pain, both emotional and physical, in the world. But it never dealt with the question of how does a person in pain end the pain? I think the reason that it doesn't is that C.S. Lewis didn't find the answer, at least he didn't find it before his publisher's deadline. And maybe he knew that everyone's route out of pain is different and telling people what worked for you may not help them in the slightest. And maybe there is another reason, maybe he never really got over the pain. That can be a way to deal the pain, living with it. In my heart I hope he found a way to deal with the pain. Even if there are days that I can't and can only find ways to keep working without the pain ever getting better.

The Calormene, first seen in "The Horse and His Boy" and seen again in "The Last Battle" have often been seen as representing Muslims against the Narnians being seen as the Europeans of the Middle Ages. And this does seem to have some validity. The Narnians, at least the human ones, are called "white" and live in the North. The Calormen live in a desert and have some cultural similarities to urban Persian cultures of the Middle Ages. But C.S. Lewis was a better scholar of religion than that. He made many public statements about the similarity of Islam and Christianity and he was very clear that the Calormen God Tash was part of a group of gods while Aslan was part of a monotheistic religion.

In "The Last Battle" Narnians and Calormene, under the direction of an ape and an ass, create a religion that combines Tash and Aslan. This leads to the war that ends the world. But one Calormen enters Aslan's kingdom.

He is named Emeth. He says that he has been a Seeker after truth for his whole life. He says to Aslan, "I am no son of thine but the servant of Tash." And Aslan answers, "Beloved...unless thy desire had been for me thou wouldst not have sought so long and so truly. For all find what they truly seek." There is a school of thought that he is Mohammed, or represents Mohammed. This is based on the belief that Tash, the villain god/demon, is based on an idol that Mohammed condemned as a false god and on C.S. Lewis's deep respect for Islam and Mohammed.

Author Biography:

Joyce Frohn has been a professional writer since the 1990's. She is married with a teen-aged daughter. She has lived in more than 7 towns across the country and has just figured out that Oshkosh is her home town.

SHORT STORY CONTEST FOR TEENS

1st

Bang
by Ethan Miller

"Good morning, Mr. Decker. You have an appointment with the committee at 8:00."

Shut up.

"The duration of said meeting is undisclosed."

Shut UP.

"You will be contacted upon arrival regarding further appointments."

Oh, just SHUT UP, you meaningless pile of metal!

"Your scheduled time for re-entry is likely to be post--"

SLAM.

Tick. Tick. Tick.

The clock watches, in quiet rhythm.

What am I doing? Why am I still here?

Tick. Tick.

My entire life, everything I've ever done, is wasted space. There is no point, no reason for me to be here. Why, why, WHY have I been so resigned to this MEANINGLESSNESS my entire life!

Tick. Tick. Tick.

These meetings, what have they achieved? Nothing.

Tick. Tick.

These dates, these schedules, these promotions, raises, everything, what difference do they make? Nothing. It means nothing.

Tick. Tick. Tick.

Nothing at all.

Tick. Tick.

I have lived in a corrupt system of death and despair. I continue to live in it. I have scavenged my way up a ladder built on human sorrow.

Tick. Tick. Tick.

I wanted it. I desired it. I NEEDED it. I saw the pinnacle, and I latched hold onto it, for fear of falling back into the seemingly horrifying abyss that gaped below me.

Tick. Tick.

What a waste.

Who knows my name, where I live, what I do? Everyone. Nearly every single worthless human on the face of this cruel earth knows my name. And for what? So one can be chained, latched onto the snarling beast of fame, daring you to trip as you sprint away in terror, only to find yourself utterly consumed.

Tick. Tick. Tick.

And to think that this recognition of the world is supposed to grant me comfort! Lies. All LIES! People don't care. You are another pretty face on a pretty screen. You're not really there.

You're not real.

Tick. Tick.

You're a fake. You're a simple facade, a distraction for the masses, so that they can believe in their hearts that life gets better. That there is more to be, to become, more happiness to explore. It's a lie.

Tick. Tick. Tick.

If I died right now, no one would care.

Tick. Tick. Tick.

If I died, right now, NO ONE WOULD CARE.

Tick. Tick. Tick.

No one would care. No one would care. No one would care.

Tick. Tick. Tick

Bang.

...



“Poor guy. Looks like he shot himself clean through. Dead before he even knew it.”

“Yeah. It don’t make no sense, you know? What could have made him do a thing like that?”

“Who knows. Maybe a business deal went bad?”

“Nah. This guy, he had everything to live for. He was set for life. Always was jealous of him, in a way.”

“Yeah.”

Tick. Tick.

“Hey, buddy, what time is it?”

“Right around lunch break. I know a good place we can hit before we come back and wrap this up.”

“Well, *he* ain’t going nowhere.”

“No kidding!”

Tick.

Tick.

Tick.

Author Biography:

Ethan Miller is 16 and is a sophomore in high school in Watertown, Wisconsin. He is currently enrolled at Maranatha Baptist Academy and lives at home with his parents and two siblings. He participates in sports like football and basketball, is an avid reader, and likes to write about himself in third person. Ethan enjoys public speaking and acting immensely, and has had the opportunity to take part in state and national speech competitions. He is planning on attending college and hopes to pursue a double major in both Speech and English.

2nd

Nothing Like New York
by Mary Robertson

Beautiful trees with leaves of orange, crimson, and gold whizzed by as eleven year old Sue watched from the window of the train. The ride was enjoyable so far. She had never been on a train before.

Sue was leaving New York City, where she had lived with her great aunt, Mrs. Margaret Patterson. Aunt Maggie was rather old and too feeble to care for Sue any longer. She decided to send her to live with her friends, Mrs. Norma and John Walker, who owned a ranch in Colorado. Aunt Maggie had sent them a letter asking if they would take in Sue for her. Mrs. Norma, being a very close friend of Aunt Maggie’s, agreed and couldn’t wait to meet Sue.

Sue clasped the handle of the flowery patterned handbag which carried all of her belongings. She didn’t own very many things. Aunt Maggie was poor, and that had been another reason why she decided to send Sue to live with the Walkers. The Walkers paid for the train ride, which was especially generous of them.

Sue knew the train would take a few days to get to Colorado, but other than that she had no idea what the future for her would be like. She wondered if the Walkers were nice.

“They must be nice,” she thought to herself. “Aunt Maggie would never send me to them if they weren’t.”

She thought of what it would be like to live on a ranch.

“Will I have to take care of animals? I’ve never even touched a horse. And I’ve only ridden in a horse drawn carriage once.”

Sue hadn’t thought about it much, but now she realized she probably would never see her aunt again. Her life was changing dramatically. She was leaving the only home she had ever known, moving to an unfamiliar state, and was going to live with a family she had never met. She knew nothing of ranch life either.

Sue felt like now was a good time to read the letter her aunt had sent along with her.

“Aunt Maggie said not to read this until I started missing home. I think now is a good time to read it,” she thought to herself.

Dear Sue,

I suppose you’re still on the train right now. I hope you are enjoying the ride. I have always wondered what a train ride was like. I want you to know I never wanted you to leave. I hope you understand that this is for your own good. I have always loved you. But I have gotten very old. I don’t expect to live very much longer. I knew you would need to live with someone who could provide for you better. I miss you already. Please write to me as soon as you get to your new home and tell me what it is like. Try to think of this as an adventure.

*Love,
Aunt Maggie*

Sue felt her eyes welling up with tears. She would miss her aunt very much.

“I will keep this letter forever,” she said aloud.

Five days later Sue was rereading the letter for the hundredth time when the train started to slow down. The whole train shook and rumbled. Then it stopped completely. People around her were getting up and grabbing handbags. She got to her feet and picked up her handbag just like everyone else.

She stepped out into the aisle and started to walk towards the door. As she walked past a boy with red hair and lots of freckles, he put his foot out just as she was lifting her foot up. She tripped and fell to the floor with a thud. The boy chuckled. Sue started to get up and she glared at the boy. She was never treated like that in New York.

“Why’d you do that?” she yelled.

The boy shrugged and grinned.

“You’re terribly rude.” And with that she started toward the door again.

“Hey wait!” said the boy. “I’m sorry for tripping you. I guess it wasn’t a nice thing to do. My name is Ted. What’s yours?”

Sue wasn’t very happy with the boy, but she decided it wouldn’t hurt to forgive him, especially since he’d said he was sorry. Besides, she had been lonely the whole way to Colorado and thought maybe they could become friends.

“My name is Sue. Are you from around here.”

“Yup. I am coming back from New York after going to my older brother’s wedding. I work for the Clarks and live

with them. Where are you from?"

"I'm from New York coming here to live with the Walkers."

"I know the Walkers. They are the Clarks' neighbors. Why are you coming to live with them?"

"Because my only living relative is too old to care for me. She was friends with the Walkers and she has sent me to live with them."

"Well then, I guess I'll be seeing you once in a while. I'd better go though. The Clarks are probably waiting for me."

With that he started strolling down the aisle to get off the train. Sue decided to follow him since he knew where he was going and she didn't. She got to the doorway of the train and stepped off. It felt strange to be standing on ground that wasn't moving.

She didn't know what the Walkers looked like and she doubted they knew what she looked like. She searched for Ted in the crowd, hoping maybe he could help her find the Walkers. Then she saw him shaking hands with a man. She walked over to them.

"Hello, Ted, do you see the Walkers anywhere? I don't know what they look like."

"Oh, they're right over there."

He was pointing to a man and a woman standing beside a bench. Walking towards them, Sue began to feel nervous. The woman saw Sue and smiled.

"Hello, you must be Sue Patterson. I'm Norma Walker and this is my husband John."

"Thank you for taking me in on such short notice."

"It was no trouble at all. I've missed having some young ones around the house since they all grew up, and I never had a little girl. Only boys. I was excited at the thought of having a girl to care for. And you can also help me around the house."

Mr. Walker took her bag, and they went over to the wagon. Mr. and Mrs. Walker sat in the wagon seat. Sue guessed she was supposed to sit in the back. The wagon lurched and they were off. She let her legs dangle out the back.

The ride was bumpy and long, and Sue frowned as she remembered her relaxing walks around the city. Nothing like New York. The ground was spotted with green and yellow sage and there was dirt everywhere. Pine trees and boulders also decorated the landscape. They traveled on a dirt road. She could see mountains in the distance. She sighed as she remembered the familiar buildings, smiling faces, and the hustle and bustle she had always loved. Nothing like New York. Sue had a feeling there were lots of things here that were different from New York.

After an hour, a homestead came into view. There was a log cabin with a fence around it. She could see a few

barns, some sheds, and a corral with some horses in it. At least twenty plump chickens were roaming around a lopsided chicken coop and pecking at the ground. A big, grey dog dozed by the front door. Once they got closer she could tell that there were flat stones that served as a sidewalk leading from the road to the house, and a cheery sunflower garden was in the front yard. The home looked charming but different from anything Sue had ever known. Nothing like New York.

Mr. Walker stopped the wagon to let the ladies out. Sue followed Mrs. Walker inside. At first they were in the kitchen. There she saw a rectangle table with twelve wooden chairs, a black stove, a brick fireplace, a sink with a water pump, and cupboards lining the walls.

Then Mrs. Walker led her down a small hallway and opened a door on the left side of the hall. It was a small, musty room but had a big, comfortable looking bed with a blue and white checkered quilt. Beside the bed was a little wooden nightstand with a white lamp that had a pink rose painted on it. There was a dresser with a mirror leaning on it opposite the bed. Above the bed was a large painting of a meadow that had millions of little purple flowers and a herd of cows in the distance. There was a window with lacy curtains letting the sunlight in.

“What a lovely little room,” Sue thought.

“Well, I suppose you’re a bit tired after your journey. I’ll let you rest and maybe wash up some. Supper is at 6:00 o’clock.”

Sue noticed how dusty she was. Her mauve dress was almost brown around the hem and her stockings and shoes were changing color from black to gray. Setting her hand bag on her new bed, she started unpacking. She put all of her clothes, only a few dresses and some underclothes, in the dresser. An old photograph of her mother and father and a copy of Little Women were the only other things she owned.

She put a dress on that Aunt Maggie had given her, saying it would be better for the ranch than the other dresses she had left in New York. It was tan with thin, vertical, brown stripes. Sue disliked the dress because of its plainness. It was nothing like the beautiful dresses of New York. She had wiped her shoes and put on a new pair of stockings. She wrote Aunt Maggie a letter and then she had rested for an hour. Now she was starving. She hadn’t had much to eat for the last few days and the smells from the kitchen were delectable.

Now Sue knew why the Walkers had so many chairs at their table. Eight men sat there eagerly waiting to eat. Sue stood not knowing where to sit. Mrs. Walker came holding a bowl of steaming mashed potatoes in one hand and a platter of steaks in the other. There was already a bowl of brown beans and a basket of fluffy, white bread on the table. When Mrs. Walker sat, Sue sat beside her. Mr. Walker stood and the men became quiet. Mr. Walker said a prayer, and then the men started passing around the food.

“These are the ranch hands,” said Mrs. Walker. “I feed them every suppertime.”

Supper was simply delicious, and Sue enjoyed listening to the stories of the work the cowboys had done that day. Soon Sue was helping Mrs. Walker with the towering pile of dishes. It took a long time, but Mrs. Walker was friendly and had plenty of fun stories to tell while they worked.

“I’ve never washed so many dishes before.” said Sue when they finished.

“Yes, I’m glad I won’t have to do it alone anymore,” said Mrs. Walker.

When they were finished Sue followed Mrs. Walker out the back door. Mrs. Walker sat in a porch swing and patted the spot beside her. Sue sat beside Mrs. Walker, unable to take her eyes off the magnificent scene before her. A green pasture, where cows were grazing, led to majestic mountains in the distance. Red, orange, purple, yellow, and blue streaks painted the sky as the sun set behind the mountain. The evening air smelled sweet, fresh, and cool. It was refreshing after a long day. Sue thought about how Aunt Maggie wrote in her letter for her to think of

this as an adventure.

Sue looked up into the kind face of Mrs. Walker, smiled contentedly, and said, “Nothing like New York.”

Author Biography:

Mary Robertson is a home-schooled fourteen-year-old eighth grader from Central Wisconsin. Her favorite subjects in school are English and history. In her spare time, she enjoys photography, camping, hunting, and making memories with her six siblings. She loves visiting family in New Mexico, where she rides horses, helps her cousins take care of chickens and goats, hikes the mountain ridges, rides in cattle round-ups, and careens down dirt roads on the back of a four-wheeler. Mary is an avid reader, and especially enjoys the stories of Louisa May Alcott and Laura Ingalls Wilder.

3rd

**This Is After
by Ashley L. Sanders**

I’m not like other people. I’m an outcast in a civilization where people are made to be the same. I’m the only one in the world who likes my differences. I am the only person in my family still alive. My grandparents died 15 years ago, three years before my birth. My mother died giving birth to me; my father couldn’t take not having her around, and committed suicide a month after her death. I am told I was the one who found him. I don’t remember, my memory is outstanding, I can remember things from when I was two, opposite of everyone else in my family. Yet, I can’t remember the one thing I’ve been trying so hard to see and envision my whole life.

I find peace with nature, which is exactly where I am right now, sitting beside the lake, my new house behind me. I was adopted two months ago by Mary and Jonas Smith. They have no idea what they are putting me through.

Every day I would wonder if I should even be alive, my mother gave me life. I took hers. I look at photographs of them, my parents. I cry myself to sleep holding these pictures. I’m doing the exact same thing now. Crying, staring at the photographs. Mary Smith told me to get rid of the pictures, that they were holding me back from my true potential. Ever since, I’ve hated her. Jonas isn’t too bad though. He gives me my space, and I give him his. He doesn’t treat me like a daughter, or an orphan. He treats me like an acquainted friend. I like that about him; he knows I’m not ready yet. Not ready for my parents replacements, Not even close.

I stand and walk around the lake once, trying to do something before I have to see Mary again. I refuse to call her mom. The faint breeze around me picks up, and whips my hair all over my face. I ignore it. The slight pain feels nice, gets my mind off my parents.

I hear someone call my name. I see Mary waving to me. I turn back, ignoring her. After about a couple of seconds I hear her slight footsteps slapping the sand. She grabs my arm and whips me around. She stares deep into my narrowed eyes.

“Why were you crying again?” She asks me. Not mean, just sympathizing. Maybe a little mad at herself for choosing me out of all the orphans. I really wouldn’t doubt it.

I wipe my eyes but don’t answer. She sighs, but accepts my silent response, and walks with me back to the small house. She just doesn’t understand that my whole life I just try to live up to my mother. I just don’t feel like I’m good enough, like she should be alive and I shouldn’t.

Mary sits me down in a chair and I wait for supper. When my plate is set down, I instead watch Mary eat. Every once in awhile she peeks at me to see how much I’ve eaten- not a single bite. Jonas walks in and pats me on the back before sitting down. He smiles at me and I offer him a faint smile in return.

"If you don't want to eat you don't have to," he announces.

"Jonas!" Mary scolds him. "If she doesn't eat she'll feel even worse! You can't tell her what to do. Especially when it's not good for her!"

"Come on Mary, give the girl a little slack would ya'?"

"Jonas I don't want to have this conversation with you, but if I must I know I'll win."

"Are you really that egotistical?"

"Look who's talking Mr. I'm-so-perfect."

"Come on Mary are we really going to do this again?" Jonas says sighing.

"Jonas I really thi-" Mary starts.

"I'm still here." I whisper.

Mary looks at me, "what was that sweetheart?"

I look up at her fresh tears streaming down my face. "I said I'm still here. If you're going to argue about which one of you is the better parent for me, do it somewhere else!" I stand and start walking up the stairs to my bedroom.

Punkin' I'm so sorry, I shouldn't ha-" I shut Mary's voice out of my head. I close my bedroom door behind me. Curling into a little ball on my bed, I stop crying. I open my fist that's been closed since I came inside from the lake. The picture of my parents on a sunny beach sends all my terrible emotions through my head again.

It all runs through my head again, all of the pain and emotions flooding through me last month were so bad I tried to kill myself. I grabbed the picture of my parents and I walked out to the lake. When my shoes met the water, I ran. Then when my feet could no longer touch the bottom, I sank. Slowly I rifted to the bottom. I exhaled. Jonas saw me running into the water. He saved my life.

Everyone at school calls me weird although most of them are scared of me. I try to ignore them, but most of the time it makes me feel worse. It has been a month since my near-death. Mary treats me like a baby for it. Jonas tries to keep me happy, and I'm thankful for that. It's one of the few things I AM thankful for.

I feel the small currents underwater drag me down as I relive the moment. Not big roaring waves, that crash and smash. Just silent, deadly, lethal currents. I remember opening my eyes and seeing my hair floating around me, the panic I felt, what if my mother wanted me here? Wanted me to stay alive so there was something left of her. So I decided to try swimming to the surface. It was hard, I panicked a lot. Jonas saw me and saved me before I went back under. I owe my life to my dad.

I freeze. I just called Jonas dad, and it felt nice. I shake my head and clear my thoughts, or at least I try. I can see myself calling Jonas dad, but never Mary mom. I repeat NEVER. Even if she tries she would never live up to my mother. My mother had gorgeous baby blue eyes and wheat colored hair that shone in the sun; at least that's what I've heard.

I wish all the time I could have gotten to know my mother. I've been told she was the nicest and funniest person around.

I stand and decide to head back downstairs and apologize to Jonas. If Mary's there I'll just ignore her.

I find Jonas in the kitchen drinking some coffee. I smile at him and he smiles back. Behind me coming down the

stairs I hear someone. I turn to find Mary holding a box that looks extremely heavy.

"I'm sorry, but I figur-" I stop her.

"Don't talk to me." I say coldly.

"Hey, now calm down, she wants to show you something." Jonas voices.

Mary walks over slowly and sets the box down slowly. She starts unloading a big stack of paper, some jewelry, a music box, and prettiest crystal heart I had ever seen. I am drawn to the crystal, my hand slowly creeping up on it. I look at mary and she nods her approval. I grab the crystal and bring it to my eye. It reads on it *Evelyn Rose my precious, my forever*. I set down the jewel and look at some of the jewelry. There is a pearl necklace I recognize from somewhere. As well as some dangling diamond earrings. I set the jewelry down. I pick up the top paper, my birth certificate. It reads on it, *This certifies that Evelyn Rose White was born to Isabella Jade Thomas and Ethan George White on-*. I can't read it anymore. The tears fall down my cheek, and I get a tear on the edge of the birth certificate, my birth certificate.

"Your mother's stuff. I bet you didn't know we were college roommates. I got this right after she died and was holding onto it until you got a stable home, but I figured since you were mad. This might help. Did it?" Mary says to me quietly. "Evie?"

I look up at her and set the certificate down. I pounce on her and wrap her in a ferocious hug. "Thank you, Mary."

We stand swaying for a while, and after about a minute Jonas joins us. Mary kisses the top of my head. You know what I said before, about the trying to kill myself because I wasn't worthy of my mother? Well I'm done with that, I'm going to make myself a better person, so the people around me will be better. And I'm going to start right now.

"Hey , Mary." I say.

"Yes?" She mumbles as her head is still in my hair.

"I love you."

I feel Mary tense up beside me and it takes her so long to respond I get a little scared.

"I love you too."

Author Biography:

Ashley Sanders goes to school at Campbellsport Middle School. She has many friends in her seventh grade world and a great life, so she decided to go to the other side of the story in places such as dreams, books, and movies. This is where she got the idea for this book. She wanted to create a lasting impact, and is hoping her writing can do that. Ashley often talks to her dog about troubles she has, mostly because he's the anti-Evie. She is currently 12, growing up in a small town called Campbellsport, where things are going well.

