



Literary Magazine  
SCPL Niskayuna Branch  
Teen Writing Club  
2020

Dear Reader,

Pen to Paper Magazine is a collection of writing by young artists in our community in grades 6-12. The writing was compiled and edited by the Schenectady County Public Library's Teen Writing Club in spring and summer of 2020. This magazine was published with funding from the Friends of the Schenectady County Public Library.



# Contents

<i>Unstoppable Warriors</i> by Arya Rajasekar.....	page 4
<i>Getting By</i> by Cora Wareh.....	page 5
<i>Listen</i> by Isabella Smarro.....	page 7
<i>The Pandemic</i> by Jesse Graiff.....	page 8
<i>Self</i> by Sena Chang.....	page 9
<i>Lilah's Beach</i> by Sylvia Giordano.....	page 11
<i>The Virus</i> by Arya Rajasekar.....	page 14
<i>The Story of a Man Who Never Gave Up</i> by Mansvin Sood.....	page 15
<i>Red</i> by Molly Graiff.....	page 16
<i>Wingdings</i> by Richard St. Sir.....	page 17

# UNSTOPPABLE WARRIORS

*By Arya Rajasekar*

We are warriors  
Unstoppable warriors  
Fighting the invisible  
Even though  
We sometimes fall  
We are fighting  
For our friends  
Family  
Our country  
But more than us  
Social worker warriors  
Work the hardest  
Risking their lives  
working ,working, working...

Even though we are separated  
We still know each other by heart  
So remember  
To be thankful and  
To be warriors  
Unstoppable warriors

## GETTING BY

*by Cora Wareh*

My pad of paper is yellow and worn  
and my pen is scratchy.  
But I'm just getting by,  
aren't I?  
Aren't we all getting by?

Her uniform droops  
and her name tag is crooked.  
"What can I get you  
today?  
How can I help you  
get by?"

Only coins in her pocket  
and she strains to see.  
She's just trying to get by,  
isn't she?  
Aren't we all getting by?

Her eyes narrow.  
She squints.  
"Are you spying  
on me?  
I want you to go.  
See you; bye."

Does she wish she could present herself in ways that would  
impress you?  
Just for now, she's got to get by.  
For how long?  
Aren't we all getting by?

"You think you deserve to judge me?"  
I shake my head.  
She tugs her skirt down;  
it never goes far enough.  
"Writers. They're judgy.  
Aren't they?  
Don't you know  
I'm just getting by?"

Aren't we all  
getting by?

The sentence hangs  
between the two of us,  
unspoken.

"Maybe-" I start.

"Maybe..." she continues.

She narrows her eyes.

"Bread and butter,  
coming right up."



# Listen

*by Isabella Smarro*

**Listen to me when I am broken  
During the days I have not spoken  
For my emotional connection  
Has no affection.**

**Listen to me when struggles take form  
During the days that life is a storm  
For no one cares if I'm unsure  
Since my loneliness has no cure.**

**Listen to me when hate has come  
During the moments I'm treated as a bum  
For being skipped  
Feels like I've just been flipped**

**Upside down  
And seen as a clown  
Emptiness is my friend  
I see no end  
SO PLEASE!!!!**

**LISTEN TO ME  
As I do for you  
I have no glee  
And it seems you have no clue  
I am breaking  
I feel as I am shaking  
I need the choice  
To hear a voice  
That isn't mine  
For I can be fine!**

# THE PANDEMIC

*by Jesse Graiff*

It destroys everything, the way we know and love it  
Frustration, confusion and anger  
We try to figure it out  
But yet it still spreads  
We do what we can  
And it settles down  
But like the monster it is, it's still there  
We start to appreciate the little things  
And adapt to a new normal  
A new normal that brings us all together

# 自己: **Self**

*by Sena Chang*

i am from books

from everlasting hours in a novel,

constantly relying on them to kidnap me from reality.

i am from that oak piano in the corner of my room,

It's height once much taller than me.

within its keys hold moments

of frustration and angst, jubilation, and success.

i am from the bustling sidewalks of South Korea.

from the lonesome streets of Tokyo.

both academically rigorous, burdensome—where failure carries an unspoken stigma.

i am enriched by failure, which carries the bitterness of an unripe lemon.

i am from hardships, from countless hours of anger and fury tingling in my fingertips,  
from countless unspoken childhood traumas.

yet soon did success and triumph rise,  
my body releasing fireworks of euphoria, adrenaline, and elation.

once a girl who was the epitome of youth,  
wishes for nothing but eternity.  
for the moments of being young forever are long gone.

once regardless of the world I was living in,  
reality now holds my hand.  
all these moments are engraved into my soul,  
my identity— all stored in the furthest corners of my heart.



# LILAH'S BEACH

*By Sylvia Giordano*

I sit up, my head foggy and rub my eyes.

“You know, I landed on my feet when I got here,” says an oddly familiar voice. As my head starts to clear I hear the ocean meeting and I notice the faint smell of salt. I haven’t been to the ocean in years, not since... since Lilah died. I quickly open my eyes and hurry to my feet, baffled by my surroundings. I’m standing on large rocks, smooth on top jagged on the edges, all in slight variants of a neutral tone of light grey. When I look out I see that the rocks stop rather abruptly about four feet from where I stand. They drop a few feet on to a beach of white sand which eventually drops into the ocean.

“Beautiful isn’t it?” I whip around to see a girl standing about eleven feet left of me. She’s wearing a white, loose fitting dress that falls all the way to her ankles. It’s constantly moving in the breeze with her sand colored hair. The sleeves reach all the way to her wrists. I can’t see much else from so far away, but I can see enough. Enough to know that it shouldn’t be possible for her to be here.

“It can’t be...” I mutter to myself.

”What, you don’t like it?” she inquires, her voice beginning to form a steel edge.

“Uhh...” is all I can manage to say. How is it possible? She can’t be here... She can’t! I saw her... I watched her die! She turns toward me revealing a sun hat in her left hand. She hurries over to me, her steps light and graceful but swift and efficient.

“No, not you... no,no,no... you’re so young...” She trails off.

“Lilah? Is that you? How is that possible?” She ignores my question and looks me over. She pokes my arm a few times before stepping back with her hands on her hips.

“What is going on?!” I ask, panic rising in my chest. Lilah just stares at me, her eyes distant. Her eyes are so beautiful on this bleak beach, where even the sky bears no color. Lilah always told people she had green eyes even though they were hazel. If she wore the right colors they looked green, but usually they looked light brown, maybe greyish. I’ve never seen Lilah’s eyes quite like this before, green with yellowish flecks. They stand out against her pale skin, against the pale everything really.

“Am I dead?” I whisper. She tilts her head and smiles sadly. It’s quiet for what feels like a very long time before she gives her answer.

“Maybe.”

What do you mean maybe?”

“I mean maybe. I’m not sure yet.”

“How can you tell?”

“It’s hard to explain, and if you’re not really dead, I don’t have time to tell you.”

“Wha-”

“Be quiet,” she commands. In different circumstances, I would have told her that I am not a dog that she can boss around and just force into submission, but the urgency in her voice forces me to comply with her orders.

“Answer my questions with total and complete honesty. I need to figure out what’s going on here...”

“Um... okay...” I’m too confused and desperate for answers to disobey.

“What’s the last thing you remember before coming here? Really think.” At first when I reach back into my memories I find nothing. I panic for a second, desperate to find something, terrified that I’d lost myself in my own mind.

“I-I can’t remember! It’s all gone!” I say, panic rising in my voice.

“Think! It’s there, just dig deeper. You have to!”

“There’s nothing to dig in! It’s all gone!”

“Okay, okay. Um... Names! Start with names. Make a list of names in your head. Don’t say them out loud. Then put faces with the names. Then go from there. That worked for me.”

“Okay.” I murmur. I try for several seconds, but nothing comes up. I start to panic again, wondering if this means I’m really dead.

“Not working?” Lillah asks upon seeing the look on my face. I just shake my head defeatedly.

“Okay... don’t worry...” she mutters, her hands starting to fidget. “Try... try places. Think of a place and how it’s relevant to you,” she tells me, concern etched on her face. She nervously tugs at the end of her sleeves and glances out at the ocean while I frantically try to think of a place other than this one. Just as I’m about to give up, the echoes of a memory begin to take shape.

“I-I’m getting something!”

“Really? Great! Focus on it, don’t let it go!”

“I won’t...” I mutter, trying to grasp the memory, trying to make it take shape. Eventually it does, but I kind of wish it didn’t. I remember the awful lurch as the car behind me rammed into my car and the smack of my forehead hitting the steering wheel. I remember the terrible screech of metal collapsing in on itself. I remember the contents of the back seat flying through the windshield and the little pieces of glass clinking as they fell to the dashboard. I remember the airbag deploying and knocking the wind out of me. I remember hearing yelling, screaming, crying, distant police sirens, and the crackle of flames, before darkness descended upon me. I relay all of this to Lillah who does not hide her sadness well.

“Well. You’re not entirely dead yet. Or else you wouldn’t remember anything this early,” she whispers, tears gathering in her eyes.

“Why is that a bad thing?”

“It’s not!” she squeaks.

“Why are you crying then?” I ask, exasperatedly.

“I-I’ve been here so long... other people come and go... but they never stay... and-and I’ve been waiting for you and mom and dad so we could all go as a family...” she blubbers.

“It’s okay, it’s okay, I’ll stay with you. We can wait for mom and dad together.”

“No it doesn’t work that way! If the police get to you in time, you won’t have any control over whether you stay or go!”

“Oh. Go without us then. We’ll find you. Where would you go anyway?”

“There’s a boat that comes,” she says gesturing toward the ocean. “When there are other people here they get on it and go who knows where. And I don’t want to go without you! What if the boat takes us to different places? Or what if the boat doesn’t come back? It doesn’t have a schedule, it just comes and goes!” I look into my sister’s eyes and remember the last time I saw her, all the machines surrounding her and the tubes protruding from her body. She was trying to say something to me but she couldn’t talk, the doctors were talking to my parents outside. She grabbed my arm, her matted hair spread out on the white pillow, her eyes wild. She started grunting urgently, the machines started beeping abnormally, a million doctors rushed in, talking to each other in that calm but firm and urgent doctor voice. I was pushed away, then backed into the wall in horror. Then I heard that one long high pitched beeeeeeeeeeep. The beep that means death. I kept waiting for it to stop, for the doctors to fix it like they always did on TV, but they couldn’t. I was only fourteen when it happened, Lilah only seventeen. And now, after all that suffering, she’s stuck here alone. She even still looks seventeen just as I remember her.

“Do you remember the day you-um-your last day on Earth?”

“I don’t want to talk about it,” she says sternly, her eyes filling with new tears.

“Sorry, it’s just... what were you trying to tell me before everything...” She laughs a choked laugh.

“I was trying to tell you to take care of the cat. Not to forget about him.” She smiles through her tears. I laugh a little, trying not to cry too.

“Sounds like you.”

“Yeah.”

“Hey, the rest of my memories are coming back! I have so much to tell you!” I grin. But she lets out a strangled sob.

“You don’t have time!” She sobs.

“Why not?” But I know the answer the second I ask the question. My memories are coming back. I remember Lilah saying that if I were dead I wouldn’t remember anything so soon. The more I remember, the closer I am to life.

“You probably won’t remember any or much of this but... try! I don’t know!” Her voice is loud and frantic, and she’s making big gestures with her hands.

“Of course I will! And you should get on that boat. I’ll find you!” She whimpers in response. Suddenly my head is pounding and the world around me fades into nameless shapes and colors, and Lilah fades with them.

“I’ll find you!” I yell out to her, hoping she can hear me. Hoping that it’s true.



# **The Virus**

*by Arya Rajasekar*

Here I am  
In complete isolation  
Lysol spray has become the perfume  
Hand sanitizer has become hand lotion  
I would reach out to you  
But an elbow's touch wouldn't do  
The newspaper has become the Bible

Here we are separated by the invisible  
A simple Virus  
Has done the unthinkable  
Destroyed businesses  
Ruined relationships  
The death toll rises  
And hope decreases  
But I believe  
We will all get through this together  
We will all get through this

# The Story of a Man Who Never Gave Up: Dhirubhai Ambani

*by Mansvin Sood*

## Beginning:

Dhirajlal Hirachand Ambani is mostly known as Dhirubhai Ambani. He was an Indian businessman who established Reliance Industries, a petrochemicals, power, and textiles business that was the biggest exporter in India and still is. Ambani was born on December 28, 1932 in Chorwad, Gujrat. Ambani was the third of five children born in a village to a schoolteacher, Hirachand Govardhandas Ambani, and his mother Jamunaben Hirachand Ambani. He studied at the Bahadur Kanji school. At the age of 17, he departed to a British colony, Aden, to unite with his brother.

## Career:

In 1955 he got married to Kokilaben Ambani and had two sons named Mukesh and Anil Ambani in Aden. After a few years, in 1958, he left Aden and begin a business back in India. Dhirubhai returned to India and started his business in a tiny room with a telephone, a table and two chairs. He started to find people who would stay with Reliance for years, and he got Rasikbhai Meswani (his nephew), Ramnikbhai, Nathubhai (his younger brother) and two schoolmates named Rathibhai Mucchala and Narottambhai Joshi. During that time Dhirubhai's family would stay in a two-bedroom flat at the Jai Hind Estate in Bhulvshwar, Mumbai. Ambani was a known risk taker and considered making inventory to increase profit. In 1966 he formed Reliance Commercial Corporation which later became Reliance Industries on May 8, 1973. His business started to get bigger, and as the time came, he had control over the stocks.

## Death:

In 1986 Ambani suffered his first stroke and was paralyzed. He was in a coma for more than three days. Many doctors came for his treatment and again in 2002 he was admitted to Breach Candy Hospital as he suffered his second major stroke. This one was hard and this was his second one after the first stroke in 1986. One day, on July 6, 2002, we lost our best business tycoon in India.

## Quotes:

Quote by Dhirajlal Hirachand Ambani: "True entrepreneurship comes only from risk-taking."

This was said by Former Indian Prime Minister: "The country has lost iconic proof of what an ordinary Indian, fired by the spirit of enterprise and driven by determination can achieve in his lifetime."

Can you imagine a person who started in a tiny room and became the best Indian businessman? This shows anything is possible with dedication and hard work!

# RED

*by Molly Graiff*

You appear in the face of one who is mad  
Who screamed and shouted at his dad  
You appear on the box of chocolates one brings  
And you are the blush to the little girl who receives these things  
You are dangerous, romantic, and sharp as you play the red lipstick part  
You are tall and strong as the high heels of a lover  
You really can't go wrong  
You are strong and mighty as the patch of the American flag that all soldiers place on their left or right  
You are the leader of the rainbow and make everyone wave hello to the wonder in the sky  
You stand high on the Christmas tree when you are an elf on the shelf  
You glisten with care and make all the children look for you there  
You are a sweet, juicy watermelon that is full of flavor  
And are a tasty popsicle treat for later  
You are a beach crab who moves into new homes  
And a little angry bird from the app on some phones  
You are a crayon who is used the most often  
But most importantly...  
You are the color of everyone's heart

*Note, the letter replacements I put in are for style. They are around important terms and names. Letter replacements are often used in connection with the GASTER character by Undertale fangames. The true word count is 495 words. In UNDERTALE, determination is a force that makes you stronger and makes you take less damage.*

# ~~W~~~~I~~~~N~~~~G~~~~D~~~~I~~~~N~~~~G~~~~S~~

by Richard St. Sir

## **Report 149; The Laboratory, 20XX, Subject interrogation: sans the skeleton**

### **Result:**

I thought that all the research had been eliminated, but this morning, I stumbled upon something that I found very, very interesting. I found an entire document written in ~~W~~~~I~~~~N~~~~G~~~~D~~~~I~~~~N~~~~G~~~~S~~, a language of the ~~R~~~~a~~~~y~~~~@~~~~L~~ ~~S~~~~k~~~~e~~~~l~~~~e~~~~o~~~~n~~~~s~~, a sub-species of boss monster with incredible abilities and power. Known as one of the strongest monsters, they were the royal scientists until the creation of The Game. The Game was created in an experiment by the last known royal skeleton, ~~G~~~~@~~~~S~~~~F~~~~e~~~~R~~, in an attempt to gain powers with which he would proclaim himself God.

The experiment was almost finished when the royal guard arrived. The royal guards attacked ~~G~~~~@~~~~S~~~~F~~~~e~~~~R~~ and he died, melting into a puddle on top of the experiment. The monster dust in the puddle disbalanced the experiment, and everybody within five miles was transported into The Game, the resulting experiment. Monsterkind had lost many valuable citizens in that experiment, including our king, ~~A~~~~S~~~~G~~~~a~~~~R~~~~e~~. The ~~U~~~~N~~~~d~~~~e~~~~r~~~~G~~~~r~~~~a~~~~u~~~~n~~~~d~~ was in chaos for years. Anarchy was everywhere. Monsters were dying by the hundreds. We only fully recovered a year ago.

The document I found seemed to talk about returning and vowing revenge on those who bound him to this cursed existence. Something didn't seem right. Suddenly, I felt the lab shake and then, at the very moment the earth stopped quaking, I heard an eerie melody coming from the door leading to the old lab, which was in ruins. Soon, the melody started sounding odd, as if it was glitching and pretty soon it started hurting my ears.

I began inching toward the door, slowly gathering my magic for an attack. By now the music was giving me a migraine. I felt weak, like my magic was just drained away. Suddenly, the door exploded and a hand shot out. The hand flew toward me at an astonishing speed, wrapping its fingers around my throat. The hand felt like it was made of bone, but it also felt melty, as if it was on the verge of disintegrating.

Somehow, I was filled with ~~ERMINATION~~, which should be impossible for a monster, and I felt stronger than ever. I summoned two bone blades and turned the hand to white, melty shreds. I charged the door, and more hands came out, attacking me with lasers and claws. I easily disposed of them. I sprinted through the mist into a long corridor chock full of those hands. As I cut through hand after hand, I noticed something strange. Each hand had a hole in the center of it. There was only one monster with holes in their hands, and that was ~~Geffer~~. Somehow, somehow, he was back.

I slashed through the last of the hands and entered an arena-sized room. In the very center, floating in the air, was ~~Geffer~~ with two giant skulls by his arms. I attacked, but my blade went right through him. I felt a searing pain on my left arm, then I dove, just in time to dodge a blaster. I ended up at just the right angle to see his ~~Paul~~. I drove my blades straight into it. There was no faking death this time. He was gone forever. I never returned to the lab again.



**Magazine Co-Editors**

Sylvia Giordano

Cora Wareh

**Literary Magazine Advisor**

April Fernandez

**Front Cover Art**

Sydney Tafe

**Back Cover Art**

Cora Wareh

Are you in grades 6-12 and interested in submitting work?

Email: [pentopapermagazine@gmail.com](mailto:pentopapermagazine@gmail.com)

Copyright © 2020 *Pen to Paper Magazine*  
Copyrights revert to authors upon publication



PEN TO PAPER  
MAGAZINE