

POETRY

At Sunrise

by Kathie

The sun is rising,
A small ball of yellow light rising over the mountains.
On forever they seem to go,
Covered with endless trees,
Each one taller the next,
Growing more each day.
Over them hangs the early morning mist.
Yet held in the sweet caress of the day just beginning,
A hawk circles,
Not caring whether the sun rises in the east or sets in the west.
Gliding there, watching, he's not the only one who feels carefree.
For a single moment the world freezes.
At sunrise.

The One

by Kathie

I am from the lives that came before, for those lives have saved us all.
I am from the one we all wish we could be, The one who knows which way to
go, Where ever it may be.
Through thich and thin I will always be there, No matter what the next
corner brings.
Friends and family, enimies and those alike, I am the one who brings us
together, pulling towards the light.
Tomorrow brings a new day coming, so what does that make me?
I am the one who welcomes the day and will always be.

Someday, One Day

by Kathie

Though thousands of miles stand in my way,
Though many days have passed away,
All the time I still think of you,
Wishing, hoping that
Someday, one day
We will be together again.
Though that day may be far away,
Though both of us will go our own way,
Together our relationship will thrive,
So that someday, one day
We will see each other again,
And everything will be okay.

Friendship

by Nicole

Friend equals friendship.
Friends are our
Inspiration,
Our hope,
Our shelter,
Our courage,
Our protection.
Friendship can mean
A lot of things.
Love is friendship.
Friendship is important
To life.
Friendship means trust.
Friendship is what
Keeps us
Hanging on.
Friendship ties
Our hearts,
So love
Is possible.

Everyone

by Benjamin

Everyone makes a difference
Everyone has rights
Everyone can join the circus
Everyone can wear tights
Everyone is a living being
Everyone can be good
Everyone can make some cash
Everyone really should
Everyone likes something
Everyone can see
That everyone is special
Including you and me

Attack of the Killer Classroom

by Benjamin

It happened very recently
Just yesterday, I think
When the classroom attacked me
And shoved me in the sink
I was writing this poem
Alone and very bored
I wished something exciting would happen
And out of nowhere flew a board
It dove like a great eagle
And cracked me on the head
My chair bucked me like a bronco
"Who was that?" I said
But I was the only one
In the empty room
Then the desks began to move around
And behind me came a BOOM
I turned around and was bowled over
By an overhead cart
It sped me down the hall
And then it fell apart
No sooner had I got up
When I was hit again
By balls of every size and shape
With hockey pucks in the bargain
I stumbled backward and knocked over
The Lost and Found
Then the clothes jumped on me like a net
And spun me round and round
Then like a spider's web
They wrapped themselves on me
Outlandish combos, with clashing colors
I choked out, "Why me?"
Then like a cannonball
A table knocked me into the sink
As I sat there cold and wet
I started to think
About the awful wish I had made
I felt bad to the core
So kids remember my mistake
And be careful what you wish for!

Best Friends

by Jennifer

Best friends
are like no other
So sweet and nice
like sisters and brothers.

Best friends
accepts you for who you are.
Accepting your beliefs
treating each other like a star.

Best friends
are so really cool.
Never pressuring –
never acting like a fool.

Best friends
you and I.
Friends forever –
never wanting to say “goodbye”.

HUGS

by Nicole

A hug is like a
Warm welcome,
On a dark
Day.

A hug is like
Sunshine,
Or a great wish.
A hug means,
“I love you.”

Or
“It’s nice to see you.”
A hug is forgiveness
Of a wrongdoing.
A hug is something that

Is not a gift,
That is wrapped,
Nor a toy to
Hog or
Store.

A hug should be spread,
So the joy may be spread.
A hug is a meaningful
Word,
That has no sound.
A hug is a wonderful
Gift,
Only given by
Love.

Johnny Boy

by Julie

I sure understand why everyone stares
As Johnny boy walks down the stairs
They also stare when he eats pears and hair
But he doesn't really care
If he went to play it would be in May,
So he wouldn't miss his favorite day.

If Johnny boy did math, who would have guessed
He's only the best but still a mighty fine pest!

Hope

by Anna

War across the globe
New, old
Young, bold.
It is started at home.

She bossed him,
She made him sad.
Sometimes they boil to the brim
None of this makes me glad.

He doesn't care about the small things.
It hurt me inside.
I felt like I could have cried.
They still wear their wedding rings.

War in Iraq.
We're fighting for them to be free.
It's more than just one country.
Courage, they do not lack.

Where will it end?
Fighting here,
Fighting there,
What's around the bend?

Most things start at home.
A prayer,
A criticism,
Even this poem.
You can pray,
You can wish,
You can hope
For a new and better day.
But we need people there
To support us,
To help us,
To show us they care.

Thank goodness for liberty,
Thank goodness for family,
Thank goodness for friends,
Who'll be there until the end.

Contrast

by Jackie

I see the colors of the world
A vibrant ray of yellow sun
Wrapped lightly 'round my body
I see the blue of the sky and the sea
But mostly in your face
You're suffocating from pressure and your constant pace
Floors high
Ceilings low
Walls tight
I see the red in that highflying balloon
The girl once held so tightly, in fact too tightly
It flew, and up it went so high, it popped
A harsh explosion just like your mind
Unable to take it all in, once again
Floors high
Ceilings low
Walls tight
Ready to take on the world tonight
One by one
They feel the same
They feel your pain
I feel your pain
Finally, we let go

Swan

by Nicole

She gracefully spreads her wings to fly
Up through the clouds into the sky
Beautifully she dances in the air
Slowly moving without a care
Singing a song with triumphant voice
Seeing her destination she does rejoice
Gently she lands upon the lake
Listening to the ripples she does make
Caressing her silky feathers of white
She is captured and drawn into the night
Into the water she dips her elegant head
Glowing in the light that the moon beams shed
Silently floating on magnificent wings
Crying out the song that the swan sings

Music

by Nicole

Music. It's in the soul, the heart.
When I play sad songs my heart seems to feel happy,
Running free is my soul, when I play my music,
My sad music.
The keys seem to flow with my head,
Flowing, flowing.
I feel as if I am a bird, flying in the air,
In a dream world I am, happy, free.
When the song is ended, I go back.
To the real world of life.
Playing, thinking, loving...
My music,
My sad music.

The 11th Day of September

by the Unity Program

(Submitted by Shemineka R.)

On September 11th, our heroes died,
now looking down on us from heaven.
This is what we remember,
just eleven days after September.
The twin towers we once had,
came down in a moment's time, and the world became sad.
For the lives that had fled,
to the light of their everlasting bed.
Remember what's said from the beginning to the end...
all people have to die someday,
but the way this was handled was clearly the wrong way.
Now take a look back at how this begun,
when America was attacked all countries were stunned.
While the sadness remained, broken faces went unnamed.
No countries too vain, many names...so much pain.
It seems so simple how we leave this earth,
were they taken from their destined birth?
This was not their fault to fall to death in the tower's asphalt.
So, we must remember
and thank the Lord, the number one forgiver
on that 11th day of September.
Thanks to our heroes fallen and alive,
May their memories within us always survive!

*The students of the Unity Program recognize
Shemineka
as a participant in writing this poem.*

My Pets

by Nicole

When I am sad
My pets are there.
I cry on my soft
Pillow,
Or lay on my
Old carpet,
When they walk in.
Their eyes are
Filled with sorrow,
loyal are they
to me.
Talking to me,
In dark circles
I hear them,
Telling me,
It's ok.
I hold one,

A flying creature,
Its feathers expand.
It's happy.
Laying its soft
Head
Slightly forward.
I smile.
The softer one
Looks at me,
It seems to
Understand.
It licks me,
Soft and
Wet is
Its tongue
And small
Black nose.

"Cheer up"
it seems to say.
Walking on
the long road path,
bumpy and
large,
I walk home,
When I arrive
A small face is
smiling for me.
My heart is
Warm,
And seems to
Jump,
With the
Movements of my
Happy,

Soft friend
Smiling at me.
I am also
Greeted by a
Loud whistle, welcoming
me
Home with
A song.
Loyal and loving
Are they
God's creatures
Small and big.
Mine,
Are special
A close jump in
My beating heart.

The Mind of a Troubled Girl

by Lara R.

Doesn't anyone care about me, about how I feel?
Doesn't anyone know the pain I am experiencing or what is going on in my life?
Don't they know I need a friend, that my isolation is only a cry for help?
Why do they laugh at the way I dress or carry myself about?
All I want is for someone to accept me as who I am, is that so difficult to understand?
Why can't my family be normal like everyone else's instead of being broken?
Why does my dad come home late every night drunk with a different girl each night?
Why does my mom cry for hours on end and not make dinner or make my lunch like everyone else's mom?
Why isn't my big brother ever home? Why don't we sit at the dinner table together as a family to eat dinner
every night?
The thoughts going through my mind are so horrible that one couldn't bear to even think them.
The thoughts that go through the mind of a troubled girl.

Pink Flowers

by Nicole

Pink flowers in the springtime
They sway in the wind like a rhyme
The flowers rest where the land and sky have met
They shimmer and glimmer in the sunset
The heart pink petals against the leaves of lime.

Personality

by Nicole

Friendship, intelligence, kindness, curiosity, loyalty
Happiness, caring, beauty, innocence, honesty
Peace, truth, pride, justice, strength, might
Fear, hope, faith, heart, wrong from right
These are what were made out of
Your soul holds them all just as your heart holds love
You are you as you always will be and I am me
If you just look real hard I know you will see
You as you always should be with your special personality.

Sadness

by Nicole

Sadness.
Like a blue drop.
Like a dead soul.
Nobody can cure you,
Of sadness.
Unless,
They can love,
And care,
And make happiness
Come
Over the dark
And start
A new light.
Sadness is a
Deadly thing.
Hoping to overcome
Sadness
Is not easy,
But
Hope is like an angel,
Ready to touch your
Bleeding heart
And mend it.
Sadness is
Dreadful,
Dim, and
Dark,
But
Hope is here.

What Do They Think?

by Jennifer

I see their faces in the halls,
I see their people on television,
I hear their voices on the radio,
and I wonder
What do they think?
Their people were slaves,
their people were hit,
their people beater, whipped, spit at,
teased, taunted, traumatized.
and I wonder
What do they think?
Their people fought without violence,
Showed the world that they were equal,
That they deserved to be treated fairly,
and they won their equal rights.
But now, in the present, I wonder,
What do they think?
I am a white girl.
My people were never punished,
hated, whipped, or beaten.
I don't know what it's like to watch TV
and learn of the horrible things
that would've happened to me.
Now I see them
and they see me.
They must think my life is a cakewalk,
and that I know no pain.
As I see them, I wonder,
what do they think of me?

WISH UPON A SHOOTING STAR

By Nicole

I did wish upon a shooting star
For so many things here's what they are
A day to never end
A sun to never set
An ocean bluer than a sapphire
To see where the land and sky have met
To smell a flower of rare beauty
To hear a bird hum a tune
For a tropical island paradise
For a perfectly blue lagoon
A seashell to shine like a star
Wishes waiting to come true, that's what they are
And it all began with a wish upon a shooting star

Standing by the Seashore

by Nicole

Standing by the seashore
The sun is setting, gently falling, tumbling low
The waves now turning pink go in and out with the tide fast then slow
Standing by the seashore
The waves crash and pound against the sandy shores
A seagull flies above staring intently at the fish it adores
Standing by the seashore
A shell desperately gives off one last shining, gleaming glint
The fresh air brings in fragrances of flowers, salt and mint
Standing by the seashore
The sea, determined, loyal, friendly and proud
Its waves pound the earth making a sound, a joyful sound, both clear and loud
Standing by the seashore

SHORT STORIES

His Own Life

by Paul

Marcus gazed straight ahead, seeing nothing. His gray eyes were desolate, his mouth set in a grim line. He had been through this many times before, too many times. The crowd roared violently, screaming his name. Women tore at their clothes as he rode by in his elaborately worked chariot. Marcus cared nothing for them. He cared nothing for anything in this world anymore. His life as a farmer had ended six years before, when he hadn't been able to pay his taxes due to three poor years in a row. Yet he would undoubtedly trade his new, murderous life for his old. He was now a slave to the mob, and had become the most famous gladiator in all of Rome. Marcus didn't feel proud of that. He didn't enjoy being worshiped and idolized. All he had ever wanted was a simple life, a life of his own. Marcus' silver breastplate flashed in the hot sun, a gilded lion worked skillfully into the surface. Silver greaves adorned his legs, and he wore steel-backed gauntlets on his hands. An elegant, one-handed sword hung at his side, and he grasped the short haft of a battle-axe in his right hand. The sword he seldom used, but just one look at the plain, unadorned axe put fear into his opponents. Yet, despite all of Marcus' apparent wealth, he was not rich. Indeed he had more money than most people in Rome. However, unlike most of them, he didn't have his life. It was said that gladiators could win their freedom, and indeed a few had. But none of these had ever come close to being credited with fifty-six kills, as Marcus had. Fifty-six men had died upon his plain axe, and freedom was still out of his reach. For the thousandth time, Marcus questioned himself.

Why should I kill for my freedom? Am I that self-righteous? Have I no mercy, no compassion, no sense of right or wrong? Yet every time Marcus entered the stadium, he forgot all of those thoughts. Today he would not forget them.

A jolt brought him back to the present. His chariot had stopped in front of the Emperor's box, and another rolled up along side of his. In unison, Marcus and his opponent stepped down from their chariots. The crowd quieted to a murmur, scarcely heard by the two gladiators. Marcus did not know this man's name; He never

knew the name of his opponent. Today though he would not forget his questions. “Your name,” Marcus quietly commanded.

“Caleb,” the man replied. He was dressed in boiled leather armor, and wore no leg protection. On one arm was strapped a leather buckler, and in the other he held a short spear. He was taller than Marcus, and looked wiry rather than bulky. Marcus nodded, and the two turned to the emperor. They raised their fists in unison, shouting “Hail Caesar! Those who are about to die salute you!”

The crowd rose to their feet, bloodlust driving them nearly into apoplexy. The roar was overwhelming to Caleb, a relatively new fighter. He turned in circles, absorbing the splendor and the rush of it like a sponge. Marcus stood still, shutting the din out, staring through the sand at nothing.

The two chariots were driven away, exiting through a large gate at the far end of the stadium. Marcus and his opponent walked side by side out into the center of the arena. The two turned, facing each other. Marcus gazed full into the face of Caleb, memorizing every angle and attribute of his young opponent. “Finally,” he said to himself. Marcus nodded. Spear and buckler rose, and Marcus brought up his axe. The two men circled one another once, twice, and then Caleb lunged with his spear. Marcus swiped it away easily, and then made a lazy attempt at an attack. Caleb, more agile than anyone would expect of his height, avoided the arc without missing a step.

Caleb noticed tears streaming down Marcus’ face, flashing vaguely in the sun. Why? He wondered. It was only minutes into the match, and neither had taken a wound.

Marcus’ vision blurred with those tears, and he neglected to wipe them away. Here was his freedom. He would receive his life back today, and never be a slave to anyone again. As Caleb launched a furious attack, Marcus backed, blocking the first, second, and third thrusts. Then, as a fourth stab was made, he opened himself up. The spear drove hard into his unprotected groin, evoking a river of blood. Caleb’s eyes widened in shock, and he reflexively jerked the spear back, only serving to open the wound further.

It had been deliberate, Caleb knew. An experienced fighter would never have made such a move, unless... Unless they wanted to die.

Marcus didn’t feel the pain. He dropped his axe and fell to his knees, immobile. “Jugula! Jugula!” the crowd roared over and over again. Caleb stood stock still, shooting terrified glances at the crowd and his bloody spear, and at Marcus. Marcus held Caleb’s stare, his eyes burning into the youth’s with a life such as they had not known in over six years.

“Do it,” he muttered with some trouble. “Do it!” Caleb stepped hesitantly towards Marcus, and Marcus nodded encouragement. The younger gladiator grasped his spear just below the spearhead, and tipped Marcus’ head back with his free hand. Caleb shut out the noise of the thunderous mob. All sound, all thought, everything ceased to exist for Caleb, except the man whom he was about to kill. Gratitude shone plain on Marcus’ face, his unblinking stare overflowing with paradoxical vitality. Shaking, Caleb quickly drew the blade across Marcus’ throat, and the man crumpled powerless to the ground.

And upon Marcus’ face lay the slightest smile, and fathomless peace.

Beautiful Day

by Paul

Sara wandered slowly through the thin forest of maples, oaks, and other broadleaf trees, her hands spread out at her sides. She let her hand trail along the rough bark of a giant oak, gazing up through the mesh of green leaves at the light blue sky. Sunbeams from the noon sun penetrated the canopy in many places. It gave the forest a magical look, as if God had created this place specifically for Sara. She smiled to herself, letting her mind wander as she was wandering. Her legs took her through the trees, stepping over protruding roots and stone outcrops, as if they had eyes of their own, for Sara's were engrossed in the squirrels and sparrows and sky.

She let out a sigh of contentment. Out here, she could get away from her chores around the farm. Out here, the world was hers. Sara became herself out in these woods, rather than the young adult that her family wanted her to be.

The songs of hundreds of birds bounced through the trees. Sara watched with a grin as two squirrels chased each other up and down a maple and then onto the next, a slender ash. She sat down between the roots of an oak, leaned back against its rough bark, and began to hum a melody, adding her own song to the myriad sounds of the forest.

And in the distance thunder peeled. Sara's song faded, and she opened her eyes. She could tell by the beams shining down through the trees that the sun was still out. Again the thunder echoed, but Sara could see no sign of clouds through the trees. She glanced up, surveying the tree she had been leaning against.

Experienced hands grasped the lowest branch. She pulled herself up to the first perch of the tree without much difficulty, except that the wool of her blue dress caught easily onto the oak's bark. She went on like that until she was high enough that her father would be wracked with anxiety, and likely shouting.

Sara glanced out one direction and saw no clouds. She sighed in relief just as another peel of thunder shook the trees. Anxiously twisting in her perch, she gaped at the oncoming storm. The clouds, still a good distance away, looked to be boiling. Her branch, frightfully narrow at such a height, swayed. She wrapped her arms around it, hugging it tight, until the gust died down. She scurried down the tree as fast as she could, slipping here, catching her dress there, but never putting herself into dire circumstances. With a last bound, she hopped down from the last branch and landed on her feet, immediately breaking into a run back towards the farmhouse. A raindrop flicked her nose, and she ran faster.

"Hi daddy," Sara gasped, out of breath. Tim looked at his daughter, his heart swelling with love. Her shameless greeting made him grin. He looked into her big green eyes, innocent, yet serene, deep. Her auburn hair was dripping wet, and it stuck to her face. That hair framed high cheekbones and a mouth that seemed about to break into a smile every moment. When did this happen? Tim thought. My daughter is turning into a beautiful girl. He noticed that her saturated dress was torn in one place along the hem, and had bark stains in several other areas.

Sara watched as her father looked at her dress, and knew he noticed the bark stains and the little tear at the hem. Her expression fell. Tim saw, and had to laugh. He smiled and wrapped his arms around his daughter, paying no heed to the fact that he was soaking himself in the process. The pair walked into the main room of the farmhouse. Sara sat down next to a fire that Tim had anticipated a need for, and wrapped a blanket around her shoulders. Tim put some water in a pot to boil over the fire.

"Thank you daddy," she murmured. Tim nodded in acknowledgment. Sara watched through the kitchen window as lightning flashed and lit up the now dark sky. She wondered how such a beautiful day could have changed so quickly. But it was no less beautiful than before. She always made it a point to seek out the good in everything. Sara wrapped her blanket tighter and gazed out the window, content. A silent smile appeared on her lips, and she thought of how lucky she was to have such a father, and to have such a God.

Sparky's Adventurous Day

by Michelle

The rabbit was heading for a pine tree. If he didn't hurry, Sparky would never catch him. The rabbit leapt over a log, closely followed by the black and white dog. Sparky pushed off the log with his hind feet and stretched his legs as far as they would go. He saw the brown rabbit getting closer and closer. He was almost there. He jumped again, was right on top of him, and then...

"Aww...Sparky's sleeping! Look at him! He's dreaming!" Sparky rolled over and looked around for the brown rabbit. Instead, he looked straight into the face of Tommy, his pet. The rabbit was erased from his mind as he jumped up to lick Tommy's face. Tommy giggled and rubbed Sparky's ears. Sparky cocked his

head to the left so that Tommy's hand would hit the spot that had been itching him for a long time now.

Then Sparky heard his favorite sound in the world. Small clang noises were coming from the kitchen. It sounded as if a bunch of small objects were being dropped into a bowl. Breakfast! Sparky turned his head upright and listened again. It could have been a false alarm. Then he heard it again. He nearly knocked Tommy over as he bolted off the couch and out of the living room. He flew down the hall, around the corner, barely missing the miniature tree that for some reason these humans were keeping inside. He ran into the kitchen and wiggled under the chairs and table to get to his food quicker. He skidded to a stop, knocking over his water.

"Sparky! You spilled your water again!" Sparky barely heard this voice as he enjoyed his Kibbles and Bits. He ate as fast as he could so that no one else could have it. He didn't even notice his water bowl being refilled and placed back down next to him.

Once done eating and drinking all that he could, Sparky turned and walked to a window. He looked out into the yard and scanned it quickly. He glared at a bird that flew happily by and then looked around at the different bushes lining the yard. No sign of rabbits. Good. He could enjoy a nap then. He looked at the floor and pawed at it a few times. Then he quickly walked around in a circle three times before lying down. At last, he was satisfied.

Sparky stretched his front legs out in front of him. Then he slowly lowered his head until his chin was resting on one of them. He started to close his eyes, but he kept his floppy black ears alert. Soon, those ears began to droop. Sparky started to drift off into a light sleep when he heard THUMP THUMP THUMP. His eyes popped open and he whipped his head up. His nostrils flared as he sniffed around to see what the sound was. Seconds later, he relaxed. It was only Tommy.

Tommy was running into the kitchen. His brown hair was covering part of his face. But his freckles were still visible as he bounced into a chair and started spinning around in it. Sparky immediately jumped up and went to his side. He sat next to Tommy's leg and looked up at him. Tommy reached down and scratched Sparky's ears before reaching for something on the counter.

Sparky's nose flared again. He knew this smell. And he liked it. He opened his eyes as wide as he could and put on his saddest face. The sweet smell of a banana was drifting down to him. Somehow, this sad face always got him some food. He never quite understood why. Humans must think food cured sadness. Strange creatures they are.

After a few minutes of this sad face, sure enough. Tommy glanced down and his smile quickly faded. "Aww!" he said. "Does Sparky want a treat? Does he want some banana? Does he? Does he?"

"Honestly," Sparky thought, "what kind of a question is that? Of course I want some banana. I wouldn't be putting on this face if I didn't!" But Tommy's face looked so happy, so Sparky leaned back on his hind legs and pawed at the air. This always made humans laugh and he usually got an extra piece of food for it. It worked. Tommy laughed and threw some banana into the air.

Sparky couldn't believe this! The banana was going to get away! No! He had to save the banana. He wasn't going to let it escape. He jumped into the air just as the banana began its decent. He opened his mouth and aimed for the yellow piece. With a loud SNAP he closed his mouth over it and felt the soft food crumble in his mouth. He had done it. He saved the banana. He sighed as he chewed until it was gone.

When he was sure Tommy was finished eating, Sparky went back to the window. Again, he looked out and scanned the yard. He was just about to paw at the floor when his ears pricked up. He quickly scanned the

yard again. Something was definitely out there. He looked under the large tree to the right. Branches hung low and blocked the view of the ground. Sparky lowered his head to get a better look. Nothing. He moved his head slowly to the right and peeked into every little green bush. Nothing. He moved on the shrub on the left and peered under it. Nothing. Sparky still wasn't satisfied.

Then he saw it - the smallest quiver of a branch under the bush straight in front of him. He felt the hair on his back start to stand. He raised the sides of his lips and let out a soft growl. Staring hard at that same spot, Sparky moved closer to the window until his wet black nose touched it. He knew what was hiding there. Sooner or later, it would have to come out.

An entire minute passed and neither Sparky nor the branch had moved. Finally, he saw what he was waiting for. A tiny pink nose poked out of the bush and moved from side to side. Sparky growled louder and hit the window with his paw. The nose slowly started to emerge from the bush until a small furry brown head was visible with two long ears sticking straight up out of it. A rabbit was hiding. It looked straight at Sparky and Sparky could have sworn it winked before taking a single hop to the right.

Sparky couldn't take anymore. He let out a loud bark that startled the humans in the house. He heard Tommy's little feet running towards him and started barking louder and louder. They had to know that a rabbit was in their yard. He had to warn them. He barked more and more, determined to scare it away. He watched in anger as the little rabbit looked at him again. Then it turned a bushy white tail towards him and hopped out of the yard.

Tommy was by Sparky's side now. He bent down and peered out the window next to him. He turned his head wildly from side to side and up and down. Sparky barked out of irritation. Tommy was never going to see anything that way. He took one last look at the place where the rabbit had been and sat down. It had gotten away this time. Tommy turned and stroked Sparky's neck. Sparky automatically tilted his head towards the ceiling so he could be scratched better and started to calm down. But he never took his eyes off that bush where the rabbit had hidden.

Later that night, Sparky wandered off into the living room. He leapt lightly onto the couch and watched the TV. He had never quite figured these boxes out. Somehow little versions of humans had created their own little worlds inside of them. He stared at it and watched the little humans running around. Tommy was watching too. He laughed happily as one fell down. Sparky was confused. Shouldn't Tommy try to help the poor thing instead of laughing at it? Then a miniature dog came onto the screen. Sparky sat up. The little dog barked. Sparky gave a soft, muffled "Ruff" in return that made Tommy giggle. This was too confusing for Sparky so he jumped off the couch and headed for the kitchen again.

He started down the hall when he heard a soft pitter-pattering coming down the stairs on his left. He froze. He knew those footsteps. He knew whom they belong to. The pitter-patter was growing louder. Soon, frilly, pink socks became visible, followed by green pants, a bright pink shirt, and a head belonging to a five-year-old girl. Sparky turned to run but was too late. The girl's pigtails bounced on her freckled cheeks as she reached out and grabbed Sparky's tail. He gave a small yelp and wiggled with all his might.

"Sparky-warky!" the girl squealed. "How's my little puppy-wuppy? Aww! He wants to play hide-and-peek! Otay Sparky-warky. You go hide and I will count, 'kay?'" She let go of Sparky's tail. "Go hide Sparky-warky! Un...two...free...fwore..." Sparky fled. He turned and ran back to Tommy. He had a plan.

Tommy dropped his hand down when he saw Sparky run into the room. Instead of nudging his head under it, Sparky began to whine as loud as he could. He could hear the girl in the hall still.

"Eweven...twelve...thirtween...fworetween..." At last Tommy got up and walked to the front door, Sparky on his heels. He opened it and Sparky ran outside. He was free! He started sniffing on the ground, making

circles as he went.

Then he smelled something. The smell didn't belong in his yard. It was another rabbit. He just knew it was. It was hiding somewhere in the yard. Sparky ran to the bush where he had seen the last rabbit. He put his nose to the ground and sniffed some more. His ears were alert again. The rabbit wasn't going to get away this time. He buried his nose into the ground and strained his ears for any sound.

Suddenly, he heard a rustling. The smell was getting stronger. He looked up and stared straight into two beady little eyes. The eyes of a rabbit! He let out a bark to let everyone know he had found the rabbit. The rabbit's ears stiffened and he turned and hopped quickly away. Sparky leapt, stumbled over a branch, and started the chase.

The rabbit wove in and out of the bushes. Being small, it could do this much quicker than Sparky who was jumping more than he was running. The rabbit was getting further and further away. When the bushes were finally out of the way, Sparky was able to almost catch up. He barely heard the distant yells of Tommy in the background. But all that mattered now was catching that rabbit.

The rabbit turned suddenly to the right and into a small batch of trees. They ran in and out of thickets, going left, right, left, right. Sparky was getting closer now. He was almost there when they came out of the trees. With a single leap, Sparky could catch him. But he didn't. Instead he stopped running and looked around. This wasn't his yard at all.

Instead of bushes, there were tall buildings that towered over Sparky. Cars were thundering by him. He glanced to his right and saw the rabbit run back into the trees. He didn't even care. He wanted to be back home. He started forward, narrowly missing a car that was speeding past. He walked along a building, tail between his legs. None of the humans walking past looked like Tommy.

Buildings towered over him. Windows glared down, daring him to come closer. Sparky turned a corner and began walking on the side of a street. Cars screamed past. He stayed as far away as he could. He turned another corner, not knowing where he was going. After taking a few steps, he heard a soft growl come from up ahead. His eyes grew wide. It was the sound of a fellow canine. But it didn't sound welcoming.

"You're lost, eh?" came a gruff voice from the right, followed by a deep chuckle.

"Uh...sorta," Sparky said quietly.

"Never been lost before, have you?" asked the voice.

"Not really," Sparky answered. At last the creature behind the voice revealed himself. Large dirt covered paws came out of a shadow. Black spots were splattered everywhere. A large, old, Dalmatian could finally be seen.

The Dalmatian gave a small smile as he spoke again. "Go back to where you first go lost, Pup. Put your nose to the ground and sniff around until you find your own scent. Then follow it. Trust me. It'll lead you home." The old dog paused for a moment in thought.

"Did you cross over any water?" he asked at last.

"I don't think so," Sparky said.

"Good," the Dalmatian said quickly. "You would have lost your scent at the water." Sparky was somewhat

confused at this, but didn't show it. "Good luck then, Pup," the old dog continued. "And remember, if you get lost, just ask for directions from some little critter, like a squirrel, a bird, or a rabbit. They'll know their way around." Sparky quietly wished it would never come to that. He thanked the old dog for his help and ran back to the edge of the trees.

Sparky quickly found the exact spot where he head emerged from the trees. He looked down at the ground and hoped this would work. He started sniffing around. No scent yet. For a few minutes, a caterpillar distracted him. Its furry body was tickling his nose when he caught another scent. This scent made the hair on his back stand again. It was the smell of the same rabbit that had gotten him there in the first place.

His first instinct was to follow that scent until he had tracked down the rabbit. But then he remembered Tommy. The rabbit suddenly didn't matter anymore. He walked closer to the trees and sniffed some more. Finally he found what he was looking for. His own scent was leaping form the dirt. He bolted into the trees, following his own smell.

Sparky found himself leaping over the same logs he had barely noticed an hour before while chasing that rabbit. DRIP! Something wet landed on his back. He stopped running and turned to see who had squirted him. DRIP! He felt it on his side now. He turned quickly but saw nothing. DRIP! His other side this time. Who was squirting him and why couldn't he find them? DRIP! Right on his head. He looked up and DRIP! Water hit him right between the eyes. It was starting to rain. Sparky glared at the sky and put his nose back to the ground as his back steadily got wetter and wetter.

Sparky leapt over another log and came to a fork in the batch of trees. A large tree was in front of him. He could either go to the left or to the right. He looked to the right. He looked to the left. At last, he put his nose back to the ground to make the final decision. His nose hit the wet earth as he took a big whiff. He froze. Where did his scent go? It just disappeared! He buried his nose in the dirt and walked in small circles. The scent was gone. He looked frantically around as if expecting to find it. He tried smelling the ground some more before giving up. He looked again to the right and to the left. He had no idea which way to go.

By now, poor Sparky was soaking wet. His tail was once again between his legs and his ears were drooping, along with his eyes. He walked ahead and sat underneath the big tree. He watched helplessly as the rain poured down in buckets. Suddenly he remembered what the old Dalmatian had told him about water. That's why he had lost his scent. The rain had ruined it all.

The rain was starting to let up at last. And then Sparky remembered something else the Dalmatian had told him about asking for help. All he had to do was find a critter living in the trees and they would tell him which way to go. The old dog's gruff voice seemed to fill his head. "Just ask directions from some little critter, like a squirrel, a bird, or...a..." Sparky groaned. "...a rabbit."

He looked up into the branches, hoping to find a bird. But all he could see though the last sprinkles of rain were sopping-wet leaves. He looked around him for a squirrel. He got up and walked around the tree. Squirrels like to have fun. Maybe they were just hiding. But he didn't find anything. Then Sparky heard a soft rustling noise come from a bush behind him. He turned quickly and waited. After a few minutes, he saw the last creature in the world that he wanted to see.

A small pink nose slowly emerged from the leaves. Tiny beady black eyes followed. Two long, tall, brown ears stuck up out of the head. The little rabbit took a hop forward, revealing two short front legs holding a carrot. A bushy white tail brought up the rear. Sparky had to restrain himself from attacking. The little pink nose wiggled as it nibbled on the orange tip of its snack. For a moment, the two stared at each other.

At last, Sparky sighed and sat down. The rabbit took a few more hops forward. "I need your help," Sparky

mumbled.

The rabbit stared blankly at Sparky as it continued to eat its carrot. Sparky was starting to wonder if it had even understood him when it opened its little mouth and said, "At last. The day has come."

Sparky looked down at the rabbit, totally confused. "It's uh...Wednesday. Is that what you mean?" he asked uncertainly.

"No no no no no," the rabbit said squeakily. "The day has finally come when a canine needs the help of the long-eared ones. Our plan is working." The rabbit placed his carrot carefully on the ground and took another hop forward. "What is it you need my help with, my wet-nosed friend?"

"What plan are you talking about?" Sparky asked.

"The plan of the long-eared ones -"

"Don't you mean rabbits?" Sparky asked, slightly annoyed.

The rabbit gasped and looked around. He put a paw to his furry lips and said, "Shh! We are not rabbits. We do not go by that name any longer." Sparky opened his mouth to ask why, but the rabbit beat him to it. "Why?" you may ask. When other creatures think of rabbits," he lowered his voice, "they think of an easy meal. So we have disguised ourselves. We now call ourselves the long-eared ones. We doubt anyone will be able to break that code." He gave a proud smile.

"So what's this plan you guys have made up?" Sparky asked. By now, he was just trying to stay friendly so that the rabbit would help him find his way home.

"The plan of the long-eared ones is to take over the world of course," the rabbit said nonchalantly. Sparky managed to turn his laugh quickly into a cough. He had heard some strange stories about rabbits from other dogs, but none this funny. The rabbit continued, "Carrots will give us the energy to defeat whatever creature comes our way." He began to stroke his carrot lovingly.

Sparky was through. He couldn't take this any longer. "I need your help," he said again. "I need to know how to get to my home."

"I have seen your home, yes I have," the rabbit said slyly. "And I know which direction you should go in. Actually, if you take the right direction, it'll lead you straight to your street and your house is nearby."

"So uh...could you please tell me which way to go?" Sparky asked, dreading the answer.

"Um...no," the rabbit said flatly. "Canines are not nice to the long-eared ones. So I will not tell you."

Sparky was extremely irritated by now. With a great lunge, he grabbed the carrot in his paw and held it out of the rabbit's reach. Once the rabbit realized what had happened, he began frantically jumping up and down in a desperate attempt to get his carrot back. "My source of energy!" he screamed. "I need my energy! I can't defeat other creatures without my energy! Give it back, you evil canine! Give! Give!"

"Tell me which way to go," Sparky teased.

"Give carrot first!" the rabbit squealed, his beady eyes popping from his head.

"Tell me!"

"Carrot!"

"Tell me!"

"Carrot!"

"Tell me!"

"Will you give carrot?"

"Yes!" At last the rabbit stopped jumping. He sat back on his hind legs and looked up and down the trees. Then he looked up at Sparky, who was still holding the carrot out of his reach.

"Go right," the rabbit whispered and pointed. And with an amazing jump, he grabbed the carrot in his front teeth and hopped out of sight.

Without hesitation, Sparky ran in the direction the rabbit had pointed. He found himself happily jumping over more familiar logs. Finally he came out of the trees and onto his street. He only recognized it because of a fire hydrant that was sitting near by. It was his favorite one.

Sparky walked up the street and stared up at each house as he passed them. Each one looked the same. In fact, they all looked so similar that he didn't know which one was his. He came to the end of the street and stared at the last two houses. Somehow he knew that one of them had to be his. He took a step forward and stopped. How could two houses look so alike?

After staring for a few more minutes, Sparky finally slowly walked up the house on his left. He took the front steps one at a time before reaching the door. He stared up at the brass knob humans somehow used to open. He lifted a paw to scratch the door when he heard the most beautiful sound he had ever heard. A high-pitched voice came ringing through the air from the house on the right.

"Sparky-warky!" the voice screamed. Sparky turned and saw the girl with pigtails coming out of the house on the right. He leapt off the steps and flew to his yard. The girl bent down and hugged Sparky's neck. It was tighter than he would have liked, but he let her squeeze.

Moments later, Tommy came running out of the house. Sparky jumped up to him and knocked him to the ground. The two friends rolled around on the ground, at last together again.

When they finally went back into the house, the first thing Sparky heard was CLANG! His favorite sound! He ran to the kitchen and plowed into his food dish. He ate the food quickly, drank some water, and returned to his window.

As if nothing had happened, Sparky scanned his yard for rabbits just like he used to. He peeked under the tree on his right. Nothing. He stared at each bush that lined the back of his yard. Nothing. He checked under the shrub on his left. Nothing. But Sparky still wasn't satisfied. He rescanned the whole yard two more times before finally staring at the floor. He sniffed it and sighed as his own scent filled his nostrils. He pawed at the floor several times before turning around in three circles. Then he finally laid down and slept.

Hours later, Sparky awoke to the squeals of the girl with pigtails. "Tommy! Tommy!" she shrieked. Sparky groaned and stretched out his legs. He kept his eyes closed, but continued to listen to the girl.

"Tommy!" she yelled again as she ran into the kitchen. Tommy, who had been sitting at the counter, turned to her. "Guess what Mommy and Daddy just told me!" she said, finally lowering her voice.

Tommy gave her blank stare. "They're taking you back to the pound?" he asked quietly.

"No, Silly-willy," the girl giggled. "They said I can get a pet of my very own! And guess what kind of a pet they said I can get!" Sparky opened his eyes and sat up for this. He secretly wished it would be a cat so he could have a toy to bat around.

"What did they say?" Tommy asked.

"A rabbit!" the girl squealed. Sparky jumped up and stared, horrified, at the girl. Her pigtails were bouncy happily around her shoulders as she ran around the kitchen. Tommy watched her for a while before finally leaving the kitchen. Sparky couldn't understand how he could be so calm. A real live furry rabbit was coming to their home! It would destroy everything!

The next day, Sparky woke up to a very excited household. He could hear the girl's squeals coming from the kitchen. He stretched and followed the noises. When he entered the kitchen, the smell of rabbit greeted him. The hair on his back slowly rose and his ears went straight back. It had arrived.

The girl would not stop jumping around the counter. Sparky leaned up and saw a small black box on top of it. The rabbit was in it. Tommy was leaning against the table staring at the box in disgust. He dropped a hand down and Sparky ran over to allow him to scratch his head.

The closer he got to the table, the stronger the scent got. He let out a small half-bark and Tommy looked down. He noticed Sparky's standing hair and said to the other humans, "Uh...Sparky and I are going outside." He half pushed, half dragged Sparky in the direction of the door.

Once outside, the rabbit smell left Sparky's nose and he was able to run around freely. Tommy got a small ball and showed it to Sparky. He quickly became hypnotized and for that moment, all that mattered was getting that ball. Tommy had it now, so it was safe. But then Tommy did something horrible. He threw the ball! He let it get free! Sparky ran as fast as he could in the direction of the ball. He caught it after it's first bounce. It had been close, but he had saved it. He loyally brought it back to Tommy.

Tommy managed to let the ball get free seven more times before finally stopping. He sat on the grass while Sparky sniffed the ground. A butterfly entertained him for a while until Tommy brought him back in the house. He wasn't allowed near the kitchen for the rest of the day. He ate in the hall and took his naps on the couch.

The day passed quickly and before Sparky knew it, everyone was asleep. Now was his chance. He quietly got up and walked to the kitchen. On the floor by his window, was the small black box. Sparky snuck up and peered down at it. It was small and rectangular without any windows. There were a bunch of holes on the top. On the side closest to the window was a flap. It was lifted up and Sparky bent down to take a look inside.

The sight didn't surprise him. A small pink nose was wiggling over a carrot that was being held between two furry gray paws. A bushy white tail was barely visible in the darkness. When it saw Sparky, the rabbit pushed the carrot gently to the back of its box. "Why hello, Mr. Wet-nose," it said in the same squeaky voice the rabbit in the forest had used.

"Hullo," Sparky said suspiciously.

"I have been named Bugs by the Pigtail Haired one. She will be my master. She has been nice enough to give me this carrot. Therefore I shall be filled with enough energy to defeat any creature! I am -"

Sparky didn't hear any more of what he said. With the slap of a paw, he slammed the flap of the box down. It was much quieter with it shut. As he walked away, he decided that it might not be so bad to have a rabbit around the house.

Time Capsule

by Michael

April 19, 2607

We are beginning our exploration to the center of the Earth. We are starting by digging a hole fifty feet deep in the center of Appleton East bomb shelter, located at 2121 Emmers Drive, Appleton, WI. According to my geographical studies, this area has the best soil for digging after the "nuke" hit the central part of the United States in the year 2336. But according to the history books, at least what's left of them, this area use to be a high school. Unfortunately, when the "nukes" hit, it completely disintegrated. According to legend, some of the kids that went to school there, in the year 2003, made a time capsule. Many archeologists have dug hundreds of feet, spent millions of dollars, and have even given their entire lives trying to find it. But, no one has.

April 20, 2607

0600 hours. The hole is almost dug. Only ten more feet to go until the ship can be loaded into the hole.

1300 hours. The ship "thin Crust" has been loaded into the launch hole.

1832 hours. The count down has commenced. "T minus 10 - 9 - 8 - 7 - 6 - 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 - full thrusters!"

1834 hours. Something has gone wrong! Terribly wrong! "thin Crust" has hit some sort of large, unknown object.

1900 hours. Men have removed the ship from the launch hole and have begun digging out the object. Who knows what it might be!?

April 21, 2607

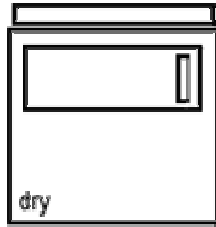
0200 hours. Men have been working through the night to get the object out. Finally, they have succeeded. The object seems to be a large box about fifteen feet high and fifteen feet wide. It seems to be made of some primitive material called titanium alloy. After examining the outside, we found only some numbers and letters: AE09112003HS. Once we finished examining the outside, we opened the box using water torches, which use high pressure water to penetrate hard objects.

0800 hours. We have, at last, opened one side of the box.

0832 hours. Great news! Our man down at the Skynet Computer Centre has decoded the serial number found on the box. He has discovered that this is the time capsule from the kids of Appleton East High School, 2003! We have just made the world's best finding since the findings of Noah's Ark and the lost city of Atlantis.

1442 hours. After opening the capsule, we found great stuff inside. We found clothing dating all the way back to the 21st century. We found old food wrappers, old magazine clippings as far back as World War II, Vietnam, Desert Storm I and II, and other great things. But the one thing that baffles us here, is this strange square box thing. It has a front door which opens up to find a moving cylinder. Kind of like a hamster wheel

or whatever those things were called back in the year 2222. Those things that made the clones run on. Any way, this object has many knobs, numbers and buttons. Here is a sketch of it:



April 22, 2607

0600 hours. Experiment one. We are beginning to experiment with this box, code named, "The Box". For the first experiment, we are going to put perishable food inside to see if it will keep it fresh.

1300 hours. We have checked on the food. It has begun to spoil. Even though this experiment has failed, we will keep trying to find out what "The Box" is. We sent our man at Skynet to look through old computer files to see if he can find any existing files that may be able to help us.

1342 hours. We are starting experiment two. We think maybe it is some type of shock absorbing bed. To begin this experiment, we are putting blankets inside the cylinder. The cylinder is the shock absorber. It works only for small women, some think. We came to this conclusion based on the articles of clothing found in the time capsule. The shock absorption works if things can somehow make "The Box" move. If "The Box" moves, the cylinder on the inside will stay in place, allowing the woman inside to continue sleeping without being disturbed. We have placed our smallest woman scientist inside "The Box".

2230 hours. Many hours have passed, and our scientist has not been able to fall asleep, due to back pain and lack of space. We tried moving "The Box" and tipping it over, but the inside cylinder does not rotate quickly enough to absorb any of the shock.

April 23, 2607

Our man at Skynet has not yet found any files, so we must keep experimenting. After the other two experiments failed, we decided to try something involving the buttons. After fully examining the writing on the buttons, we think "The Box" is some sort of time machine. Once again, we put our smallest woman scientist inside "The Box".

1036 hours. We have set the buttons to read July 19, 2003, however, they were set in numerical terms; 07-19-03.

1115 hours. We have waited 39 minutes, but our scientist has not yet traveled in time. Due to a possible loss of time, we have decided to terminate this experiment.

1130 hours. Once again, we turned to the numbers on "The Box". We now have the idea that small bombs can be put inside. The numbers on "The Box" are to type in what kind of bomb is being placed inside, and how many years it can be before it can be opened. A bomb disposal facility, of sorts. We have placed a small amount of E-4 and approximately 10 pounds of dynamite inside, and have set the numbers to 4 - 10.

1330 hours. The bombs are set and we are in a poly-synthetic hyper alloy bunker to shield ourselves from the blast, if there happens to be a malfunction.

1335 hours. The bomb will go off in, 3 - 2 - 1 - 0!

1400 hours. The bombs went off and the smoke has finally cleared. We go to the area where "The Box" was. It is completely destroyed! We have nothing left! Bad news just came, which would be good if we still had "The Box"; our man from Skynet came in at approximately 1516 hours. He found the files we were hoping for. "The Box" was a dryer, used for drying wet clothes. And a box from that year was worth 100 zillion dollars.....and we blew it up!

BOOK REVIEWS

Angus, Thongs, and Full-frontal Snogging

by Louise Rennison - Reviewed by Kristen N.

The name of the book I read was *Angus, Thongs, and Full Frontal Snogging, Confessions of Georgia Nicolson*. The author was Louise Rennison. The genre or type of book was fiction. There are 234 pages in this book. The level of this book was medium hard for me because it was in an English accent. They had different words that I didn't understand but there was a dictionary in the back of the book. There are probably lots of books similar to this one because she wrote it in a diary form. At different times and dates she would write what happened. This book is unique because the girl in the book is unique. The author keeps this book interesting because this Georgia is very unique and talks about very different things.

The author makes me care about the characters because they have a lot of different personalities. Georgia, the main character, is very self-confident. Her friend Jas is always by Georgia's side to give her advice and the same with Georgia giving Jas advice. The dialogue in this book is very believable. It is like hearing the people talk to each other right in front of you. The dialogue helps tell the story because they talk a lot on the phone or right by each other.

The setting in the story is pretty important because she lives in London in the present and goes many places. The author makes the setting important because she talks about the places and the people there. The examples of the setting is she goes to the market, Georgia takes walks, and she goes to a lot of outside concerts in parks and goes to school. This book was very interesting and very fun to read.

A Child Called "It"

by David Pelzer - Reviewed by Mike L.

The Child Called It is an inspirational book about a young boy, Dave Pelzer, who grows up and survives his abusive, and mentally sick, mother. The book is actually told through the eyes of the young boy, who is now an adult and is writing about his horrible childhood. I thought this book was excellent; it took only two days to read this 184-page book. The book is very emotional and has some situations that could be very disturbing to younger readers. I would suggest that no one younger than 5th grade read this book. *The Child Called It* is different from other books because of its unique plot. It is actually being told through the eyes of the survivor, so every moment in the book feels like it is happening right in front of you.

The plot always keeps you guessing. The reader can only guess what the mother will do to David next, or even if a hero will come and save him. David Pelzer makes you feel the pain and agony of what he felt as a child without love.

In the book, David makes the reader believe that his mom is horrible by his detailed descriptions of his feelings toward her, and the hateful things she did to him. In addition, it really makes the reader want to literally 'jump in the book' and give David a big hug and rescue him from his mother.

In the story, the dialogue was David's thoughts about his mother, or her hateful words to David. A lot of the thoughts were very descriptive negative ones that added much more to the book. It really helped the reader understand how much he truly disliked her because of what she did to him. The interaction between mother and David was either an order to do something, or just a hateful comment. This made me understand how sick his mother really was.

The setting also has an impact on the plot. At their home, there is an abundance of alcohol that the mother would consume. I think this was one of the reasons why she abused such an innocent little boy. The mother is frequently drunk, and David pays for it.

After reading *The Child Called It*, it made me realize how lucky I am to have such a loving family and a safe household. It opened my eyes and made me look at things in a different way. This book is one of my favorites and I would recommend it to anyone who is mature enough and who wants a great inspirational thriller!

Lirael

by Garth Nix - *Reviewed by Charity L.*

I read the book *Lirael* by Garth Nix. *Lirael* is mainly a magical- fantasy book. *Lirael* has 705 pages and is pretty hard book to read because it jumps back and forth between two parts. It has strange words in it, and to understand the book a good imagination is needed to follow the story. *Lirael* is similar to the *Golden Compass*, *Subtle Knife*, and the *Amber Spyglass* all by Phillip Pullman. This book is extremely unique because of the way the book combines fantasy, adventure, and mystery together and never leaves the reader bored.

Lirael has an interesting plot because it leaves the reader never knowing when the book is at its climax. One time the reader will think there, but the readers not. There's so much action, the reader can't tell where the climax is until all the missing pieces start to form together and then it ends.

I like how Garth Nix made the characters all so different from each other, but they still go together to make a great story. *Lirael* was so different from all the other Clayr's but was still one of them. I also liked how Sam and *Lirael* come from two totally different worlds and find out they're related to each other and are both searching for basically the same thing.

I love the dialogue because it seems so real and life like. *Lirael* talked to her dog just like we would if we have one. The way Sam and *Lirael* talked when they first met was like strangers and it changed as a friendship grew and then they started talking like friends do. The way the conversations in the book are so real it's hard to believe that's it's not a non-fiction book.

The way that the setting is placed makes the book all the better because it fits with the story so well. In the dead world there is a spooky dead river that branches out to the dead, and everything is so ancient that it adds spark and mystery to the book.

This book is for a reader who likes a book that has fantasy, mystery, and adventure this is the book. Go get the book *Lirael* and go into the wonderful world of reading a great book that the reader can't put down until the readers done.

Lord of Chaos

by Robert Jordan - *Reviewed by Misha H.*

The amazing Robert Jordan called the book that I read *Lord of Chaos*. This book was a book about fantasy, action, and much adventure. It had a whopping one thousand and ten pages in it - a very hard read in my opinion. Since the book is book six of a ten book series, other books in the series would logically be similar to it, and would recommend starting at the beginning of the series with *The Eye of the World*. There aren't many books like the book in this series, *The Wheel of Time*, but there are the magnificent stories of *The Lord of the Rings*. These three books are very similar to the books in this series. However, the books in my series have very distinctive differences. One thing is, even though both series are taken in the same time, my books have something called "The True Source", or in other words: "The One Power." What "The One Power" is, is a source that special males and females can "draw" upon to deliver them great power in fire, water, air, earth, and spirit. In order to fully understand the aspects of "The One Power", the books must be

read fully. Also, the continent, cities, and geographic area are fully different than in any other books including the Lord of the Rings books. Not only this, my books of course have different characters which have extensive traits, characteristics, and personalities.

Robert Jordan is a truly amazing author. His plot surprised me every time I read a page. No matter what happened, a couple pages later a new twist would pop up. Just like in the book when this huge battle started and there seemed no hope for the side of good, but then all of the sudden reinforcements came or men who could "channel", and the battle was won. There are so many surprises in the books that I can't even keep track of them. It's written just wonderfully.

There is more though. The author uses a lot of dialogue in the books. His dialogue is absolutely fantastic. His transitions from one person to another are extremely smooth. While reading the book, I never got lost trying to figure out which person was talking. Even in large groups like in taverns or meetings of nobles, I still knew who was talking, who was listening, and who was just "not there." With all books there are weaknesses of a sort, more in some than in others, but I would have to say that Lord of Chaos or any of the other books in the series have no weaknesses. The author, Robert Jordan, just did a stupendous job with everything that needs to be in a book. I personally believe that he is one of the better writers of fiction books. With the challenge that it takes to make a fiction book with new names, places, and a completely new world, I think Jordan did every part of that extremely well with no faults anywhere. This book was an extremely good read, and I enjoyed it very much.

The Street Lawyer

by John Grisham - *Reviewed by Matt T.*

The Street Lawyer by John Grisham, tells the story of 31-year old Michael Brock, a hard-charging associate at a prominent Washington D.C. law firm. It is a combination between Grisham's usual style, law suspense, and a new one to him: a gut-wrenching tale of the lives of the homeless.

The book begins like any other Grisham novel, a fast-paced courtroom thriller. The exposition, Grisham's eternal strength, sucks you in perfectly. Fifteen pages into the book, a bloody hostage situation has already arisen and been resolved. An angry homeless man takes our hero, Michael, and seven others hostage, and before it is all over the man is shot, so close to Brock that the blood splatters onto him. The man's story, however, shakes Michael so badly that he makes the ultimate sacrifice, and quits. He is hired by a legal clinic, which advocates the homeless. The salary cut is sixty thousand dollars.

Here is where the book shifts gears. It leaves the corrupt, ruthless, unsympathetic world of big-firm law, and gives you an in-depth look at the cruel, hard, cold world of the homeless. Michael is shocked by tale after staggering tale of despair from his people, those who seek his free advice. They touch him, show him a world he was looking right at all along, but one he refused to see. Yet, he realizes, attaching himself to them would only accentuate his heartbreak. He slowly becomes all too aware that most of the people who he advises will leave and never be seen again.

The story is excellently written, with the balance exactly as it should be between the two genres. At its heart, it is a true Grisham piece, but that is easily overlooked. The simple reason for this is that you are too engulfed in the human interest of the story, the battle that constantly rages between the triumphs (few), and the defeats, the hopeless cases (many). This is one of the truly masterful manipulations of the human heart that has been written in the last twenty years. It begs a race that has abandoned its own, that has left the wounded for dead for years, to address an error it has ignored for far too long. This book illustrates, perfectly, the disarray millions in our nation are left in because of the ignorance of the privileged. This book appeals to the conscience, the ever-present desire to do good in a world of unprecedented ruthlessness and carelessness, of everyone.

It stumbles at times. It is prone to getting off-track, explaining irrelevant information in detail. The ending is disappointingly unexciting, and the suspense is gone, a sacrificial Iamb allowing Grisham to write this tearjerker as well as he does. These, however, are unimportant faults surrounded by solid writing, so no one notices. His more typical books were probably better, but you simply cannot compare them. The Street Lawyer is a refreshing new style, and a masterpiece on multiple levels.

MUSIC REVIEWS

Taking Back Sunday

by Mike K.

I recently purchased a CD by a band called Taking Back Sunday. The CD title is called Tell All Your Friends. Nobody probably has ever heard of them, but they should because this is one of the best punk-rock CD I've ever bought.

This band has so much emotion. Every song is emotionally sung, and anyone could tell that they mean every word that comes out of their mouth. They scream on most of there songs because there is so much energy in the lyrics of each song. The sound that comes from their voices is unbelievable. At first when I listened to them for the first time I thought, man these guys are crazy! Then I realized that they're different than many, and, I mean many, puck-rock bands out there right now.

Instead of singing about having a girl that dumped you or a girl you want to go out with, these guys sing about their girls dumping them and them wanting nothing to do with the girls ever again. They sing about how they were mistreated and how they hate the girls' guts for what she did to them. That's why I like this band. They are trying to get back at anyone who didn't like them or wanted nothing to do with them. The lyrics to the CD are great. The lyrics display how much emotion and how much they mean something on the CD. To be quite honest, I have no idea where they came up with the song titles they did. They mean absolutely nothing about the song, but that's not a big deal!

Some of my personal favorite tracks on this CD would have to be "You know how I do." Another one of my favorites would have to be "Timberwolves at New Jersey." These tracks show how much emotion this band has and wants to show. I bought this only hearing a couple of the songs from the CD. I'm not disappointed at all. In fact, I'm very pleased with my purchase, and I can't wait for them to come out with another CD soon. Fans of the band Thursday, or Jimmy Eat World, will find this CD a must. This CD is definitely worth the 15 dollars I spent on it.

Leah



Anna



Nicole
(fabric)



Andrea



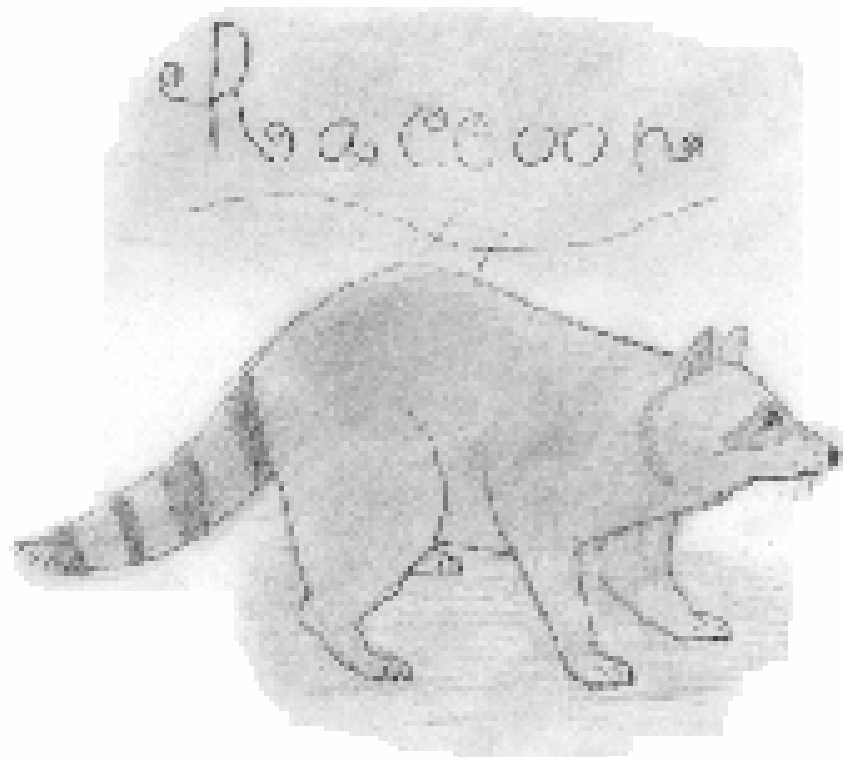
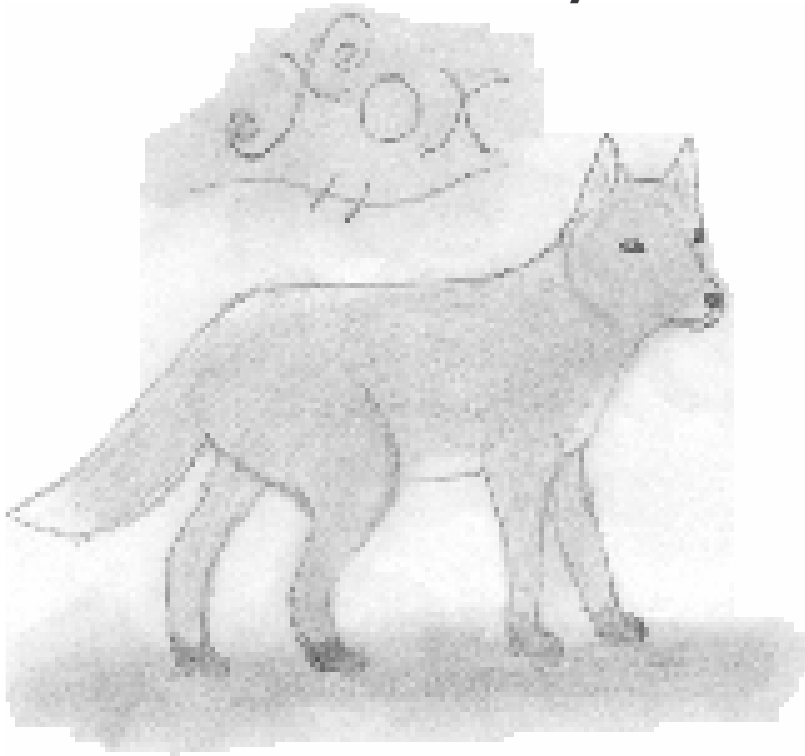
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Kayla



Courtney



Chris

