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SCHOOLNOVA NEWS - LITERARY EDITION



SCHOLASTIC ARTS AND WRITING AWARDS

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Every year in Advanced English B & C, I have my older students submit a piece of writing to the Scholastic Arts and Writing Awards. The Scholastic Arts and Writing Awards is a platform where creative students display their work, are judged, and rewarded for their hard work.

Students must first choose from one of the seven writing categories I suggest: Critical Essay, Flash Fiction, Humor, Personal Essay & Memoir, Poetry, Science Fiction & Fantasy, or Short Story. Once they choose a category, students brainstorm ideas and create an outline for their text. Students work diligently drafting their work through the writing process.

Once they are done, they share their work with the class during a classroom critique. Student's that submit their work to Scholastic are then considered for the Gold Key, Silver Key, or Honorable Mention. Gold Key winners are automatically considered for national awards. I always explain to students the importance of submitting their work to Scholastic, being that they can add it to their college resume! This year's Advance English classes have been working tirelessly organizing their ideas, creating some of the most mind blowing, heartfelt, terrifying, and captivating texts that I have had the pleasure to read.

What is wonderful about great literature is that it transforms the man who reads it towards the condition of the man who wrote, and brings to birth in us also the creative impulse.

~E.M. Forster

This year, Sophia Syritsyna received the Silver Key award for her poem "Sonata of Night and Day;" Alex Doboli received Honorable Mention for his poem "Reflection of a Person," and Brandon Cardamone received Honorable Mention for his short story "The Manipulation of Emily Irving."

Congratulations to our amazing writers.
We are proud of you!

SchoolNova Writing Competition was held for Advanced English B1 and B2 students, who were not able to participate in Scholastic Awards due to their age. The winning entries by Maria Gavrilov and Sofia Moore are proudly presented in this special SchoolNova Literary News Edition.

“SONATA OF NIGHT AND DAY”



by Sophia Syritysna

- Silver Key winner



The bees' lazy hum adds a finishing touch
To the golden haze of the stifling midday
The flowers' vibrant perfume seeps through deepest clefts
Spreading their syrupy fragrance to the turquoise bay.

The Sun descends down Her path of the sky
Dappling Earth beneath with marks of saplings swaying in the breeze
Leaving spots of waving golden splendor in Her wake
Hiding amidst the foliage of eloquent trees.

Melting upon contact with Earth's horizon
The Empress of Day steps down from Her imperial throne
Exalting the last of the tinted paints She still has
Splashing the heavens with displays of vivid tone.

Abreast the ethereal blackening sky
The Sun's ombre paints light up the Earth
The blooming buds of the Earth bow down one final time
And shut their petals until a fresh Day's birth.

Night's tranquility descends upon the globe
Unleashing into the sky a thousand fireflies
Iridescent against the ever-growing darkness
Accenting a mural of dark starlit skies.

Radiating its pearlescent ambiance
Across the shimmering reeds and silver frosted lands
The Moon's brilliant luster, transcending the stars ever-gleaming
Across the sky, stretching over the sands.

Wind rushes by, pushed by angels' beating wings
Lovingly caressing each lonely tendril of grass
Brushing past treetops and kissing the withered desert
Cleansing the sleeping Earth, suspended in glass.

Like a shard of glass falling onto the floor
Darkness is crushed by a lone golden ray
The land cools, and the air grows anew
Welcoming the dawn of a newly born Day.

Through the breaking light, humid air bathes the Earth
Settling onto lush, delicate tendrils of green
Becoming an array of pristine crystal droplets
A fragmented mirror, reflecting the Earth's early sheen.

From fair golden hay to bright summer peaches
A resplendent tide of colors floods into the sky
As a royal procession greets the Empress of Day
Unveiling an azure path to ascend and fly.

The cascading waterfalls thunder with life
Shattering their spray against ravines far below
Blessing the forestry over whom they reign supreme
With a multi-hued arc of colors aglow.

Soaring through skies, the Sun glares down on the globe
Commanding her subjects below to swelter with warmth
The amber deserts of silky sand bow in response
And so do the glacial breaths of the North.

The air itself sparkles and befriends Earth beneath
Turning somersaults over the grassy surfing plains
Becoming a vehement breeze rushing over the
Unfolding, vigorous blossoming terrain.

And Day arises, in Her infinite glory
Atop Her noble throne of the cerulean vault
Welcoming all and bringing Earth into a rhythm
Of melodic sounds from the world aloft.

As the fanfare of morning comes to an end
The Day's vitality dwindles, settling down
The creations of nature commence their tasks
Busily sweating under Sun's noble crown.

Clouds coast by synchronously with gusts of wind
Eclipsing the Sun ascending heaven's hillsides
As though they were solemn galleons of eons ago
Sailing gently through currents of placid tides.

A hazy, lethargic aroma drifts in
Obscuring diligent toil ubiquitously strewn
The lethargic rustling of leaves adds to the slow
Melodic overtone of the dazy afternoon.

The bees will still buzz in the hazy, gold air
The fragrance of flowers will still be present throughout
And every Day, one of trillions will return once again
To a tender afternoon with life all about.

"HUSK"

by Maria Gavrilov

The girl stares at the ceiling,
Where a dry spider husk dangles from a
Thin, barely visible, strand of gossamer.

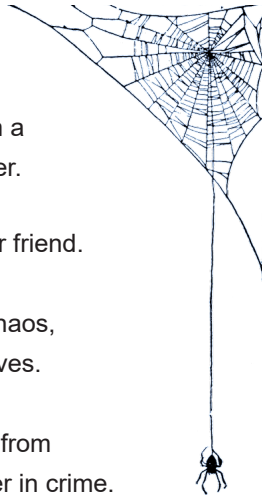
They've always done this, she and her friend.
Every time, they've sat in this room
And played, and joked, and created chaos,
And then laughed at it and at themselves.
But this time, all there is is silence,
And she finds it hard to shift her gaze from
The ceiling to her comrade and partner in crime.

Outside, a blizzard howls mournfully, and
Frigid wind seeps through the cracks under the window frame.
Slivers of ice, sharp like the teeth of an abysmal beast,
Scratch against the casements of the house, desperate to get in.

The girl knows that maybe she should talk,
But she knows that the only things she can speak of are draw-
ings, dolls, and video games,
And whatever she says will be dismissed with one or two
shallow, gray words.
She surprisingly finds herself uninterested in everything her
friend talks about,
From boys to fashion to folly.
It hurts to think that her friend has grown up and she hasn't.

The girl sighs.
She just wishes it would be like the old days.

She still remembers when they were just little girls,
First grade, out on the grassy hill,
Picking the soft pink clovers and eating them whole
Without a care in the world.
Sometimes they would run, slip, slide down the green slope,
And scribble their sketchbooks with all sorts of stories
and whatnot,
Just for fun.
She remembers when they still stood up for each other,
And fought for each other and their own peace
With paper swords.



But now, the girl doubts her friend would ever run down a
green hill
Because she wouldn't want to stain her clothes with earth.
The girl doubts her friend would scribble unseriously in her
sketchbook
Because she wouldn't want to waste paper.
And recently, she can only remember
The times when her friend had just stood still as a statue and
Watched her break.

They used to match their hair
With ribbons and choppy little pigtails,
Childish as they were,
But now they find
That neither can tie bows.

The girl hears her friend sigh too.
She finally gathers her courage to
Turn her head and look at her.
But her friend only gives her
A cold shoulder.
Outside, the blizzard roars
Louder than ever.

A blast of cold wind shoots
From under the frame with a screech.
The hollow husk of the spider,
Once colored a shiny black and yellow
But now tinted a sickly brown,
Eddies before the girl's eyes
Perhaps in its last maniacal dance.
The string of gossamer swings entrancingly,
Getting faster and faster
And thinner and thinner
'Till another gust finally tears
The filaments that held on for so long
And sends what remains of the spider
Spiraling down, down, down...



“WHEN WE GET THERE”



by Sofia Moore

“Elena! It is time for dinner,” her mother yelled as Elena Ramirez ran into the kitchen.

Elena was 16 years old, with a tall, slender figure and curly chestnut colored hair that fell to her shoulders. She walked over and gave her mother a kiss on the cheek as she helped carry the plates to the table. Her mother was a short, stout woman with similar hair and a warm, welcoming smile.

It was October 23, 2007 at their home in Ecuador. Elena’s father would be home any minute, and the family would gather around the table for dinner. As the table was being set, Elena’s three-year-old brother, Alejandro, skipped into the room, admiring his new toy.

“What do you have there, buddy?” asked Elena quizzically. Her brother had always been into building, as it was difficult to purchase toys in the situation that her family was in.

Alejandro pointed and smiled at his new wooden car, that which he had carved and built himself. “My new toy,” replied Alejandro as he drove the car across the table.

As Elena and her mother joined Alejandro, her father walked through the door. Mr. Ramirez was a medium height, buff man, with short jet-black hair and hazel eyes. He strolled into the kitchen and took turns giving each family member a hug. The family then sat at the table to consume a small dinner. Food was scarce in Ecuador, and the Ramirez family rarely had enough resources to suffice. Life there was not the easiest, and the family barely managed to get through the days. As the meal went on, Elena observed that her father was being extremely quiet.

“Dad? Is everything alright?” she asked, concerned. She had never seen her father like this, and she could tell that something was occupying his mind.

Her father looked up and smiled. “I have some news,” he replied, and took a long pause. “Tomorrow morning, there is a charter boat coming to our town, and the first 200 people to board will be taken to the United States.” He looked around at his family, beaming with pride. He knew how big of a step this would be for them.

Mrs. Ramirez looked at her husband, shocked. Elena could not even comprehend what was happening. Her village was a wreck. There was violence everywhere, with rebels tearing up people’s homes. For years, Elena’s family could barely make enough money to sustain their needs. This could be their chance.

“This is it,” thought Elena.

This just might be the start of a new life.

The next day, Elena woke up with a sense of anticipation. She glanced out the window, the sun was just rising. She gazed at the sun, a mixture of colors painting the sky. As she marveled about the sight, she could feel a nervous pit forming in her stomach. She tried to shake it off, but something about today continued to make the hair on the back of her neck rise. She decided to stop worrying and get ready for the day. She quickly and quietly packed up her clothes and belongings and flew down the stairs. Her parents and Alejandro were waiting outside for her with their belongings.

“Come Elena,” whispered her father.

“We mustn’t waste time.”

The family hurried through the woods that lead to the docks, cutting through bushes and tall vines. When they arrived, the ship was already almost full. As they approached the entrance, the guard informed them that they would be taking up the last few spots. They all boarded the ship and prepared for the escape to this new life.

4 days later:

Elena was tired. She was seasick, exhausted, and bored. Even more, she felt anxious. It was the fourth day of the long, monotonous trip, and frankly, Elena couldn’t stand it. The ship was crowded, loud, and it seemed as if the sailing was never smooth. Her entire family was miserable, for all they wanted was to reach their destination. It was 9:00 pm on the fourth day of the trip, and Elena and her family were on their way to their sleeping quarters under the main deck. In these small quarters, there were three pillows, and two small blankets. For the past three nights, Elena and Alejandro were forced to share a pillow and one blanket while sleeping on the hard, cold, wooden floor. This night was no different, and the family settled in, trying to make themselves as comfortable as they could despite the condition.

“Goodnight children,” Mrs. Ramirez whispered as Elena and Alejandro slowly drifted off. She herself layed down with her husband and tried to fall asleep. She stared at the ceiling, deep in thought. She thought of her family, of the present, and of the future. She thought of her life in Ecuador, and the huge risk her family was taking. As she fantasized, she slowly began to drift off, into a blissful, peaceful state of mind.

“Elena jolted awake. She looked around, looked at her mom, her dad. Just as she began to calm herself down, she sprung up, realizing that her brother was not next to her. She raced out of the quarters, as beads of cold sweat began to form on her neck. Automatically her mind went to the worst scenarios.

“What if he got lost? What if something happened? What if he fell?” she thought to herself as she desperately searched for him. She began to feel a hiccup rising in her throat as she panicked. Suddenly, she caught sight of Alejandro’s silhouette, as he stood on the edge of the ship. Alejandro turned around slowly and waved. “Elena, look what I can do!” Alejandro shouted as he began to climb along the railing of the ship.

Elena could feel herself begin to panic as she sprinted towards her brother. Just as she was at arm’s length of him, the ship suddenly lurched forward. Alejandro gave out a shout as he lost footing and slipped. Elena desperately tried to grab onto her brother, in an effort to save him, but it was too late. Alejandro fell off of the ship, into the dark abyss of ocean water below. Elena gave out a piercing scream that ripped through the night, and also had woken her parents up. They raced outside and saw Elena in a heaping pile. Elena pointed to the railing, where Alejandro’s shoe still stood. Her mother gave out a scream as Elena’s father rushed to the edge, diving in to save Alejandro. Elena screamed, running to the edge. Mrs. Ramirez grabbed her daughter, shielding her and protecting her from falling. Elena shook with agony, trying to get through her mother to help her family. As Mrs. Ramirez held her back, they both fell to the ground, sobbing until there were no tears left.

5 days later:

Elena was packing all of her belongings up. It was the ninth day of the trip, and also the last. She was numb all over. She had cried every night, and in the daytime she barely did anything. She didn’t eat, she didn’t sleep. She felt robotic, and she felt helpless. As Elena got ready and walked outside, she found her mother standing by the railing of the ship. She was looking out into the horizon where there was something visible. Elena gasped as she realized what it was. It was land, and not just any land, but the United States of America. She hugged her mom tight as tears began to well in her eyes.

“Mom, we’re finally here,” whispered Elena.

Her mom said nothing but hugged her tighter. As Elena embraced her mother, all she could think about was her brother and father. She realized that though they were gone, they would still protect and guide her in spirit. Elena looked up to the sky and made a silent promise. She vowed to her family that no matter what, nothing would ever get in her way of making them proud. At this moment, Elena felt a cool breeze, almost as if her brother and father were listening to her. Elena smiled and looked out towards the horizon, anticipating this new life, and what it was going to bring.

“This is it,” thought Elena.

This just might be the start of a new life.

