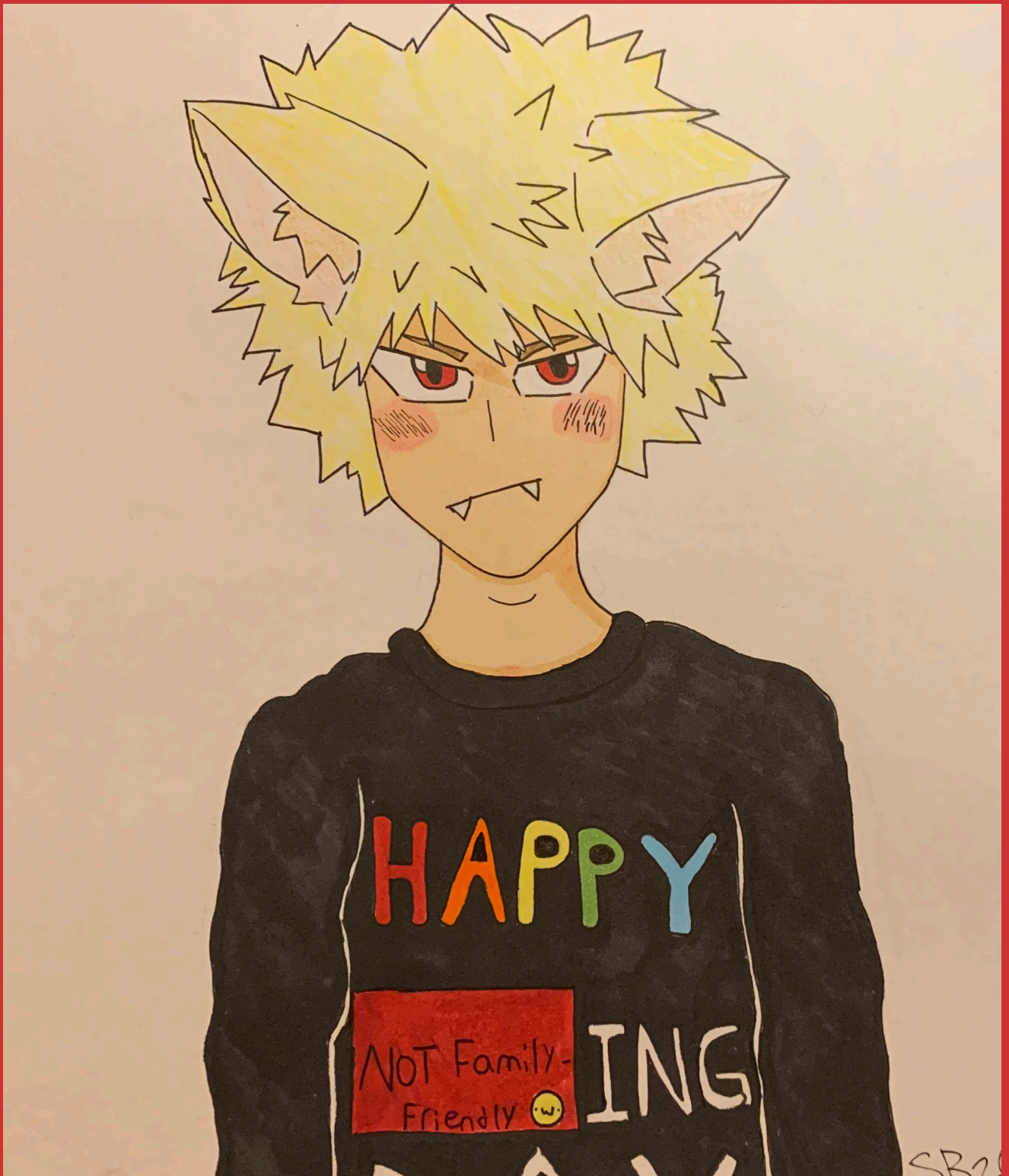





TEEN WRITING & ART SHOWCASE



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We hope you enjoy reading Gail Borden's seventeenth Teen Writing and Art Showcase! This issue includes submissions from fourteen students. We have published entries exactly as they were submitted.

To find out how your work can be published in a future Showcase, please email [zone@gailborden.info](mailto:zone@gailborden.info) or visit [gailborden.info/teenwriting](http://gailborden.info/teenwriting).



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# GARDEVOIR (EMBRACE POKÉMON)

ANDREA RAMIREZ

Gardevoir (Embrace pokémon)



FRONT COVER

**KATZUKI BAKUGOU**

SERENA BETZ



BACK COVER

**ELEPHANT IN SUMMER**

JOSHUA VERCOUTEREN



# STONE BOY

EMILY FLORES

Stone Boy,  
You strong and stable thing.  
Unfaced by everything  
Unchangeable, even by me.

I want to mold you  
Carve in my name  
Be the artist to your sculpture.  
Mark you as my property.

Yet you break my malet,  
Avoid my brush,  
And leave my crying  
Without a glance or thought.

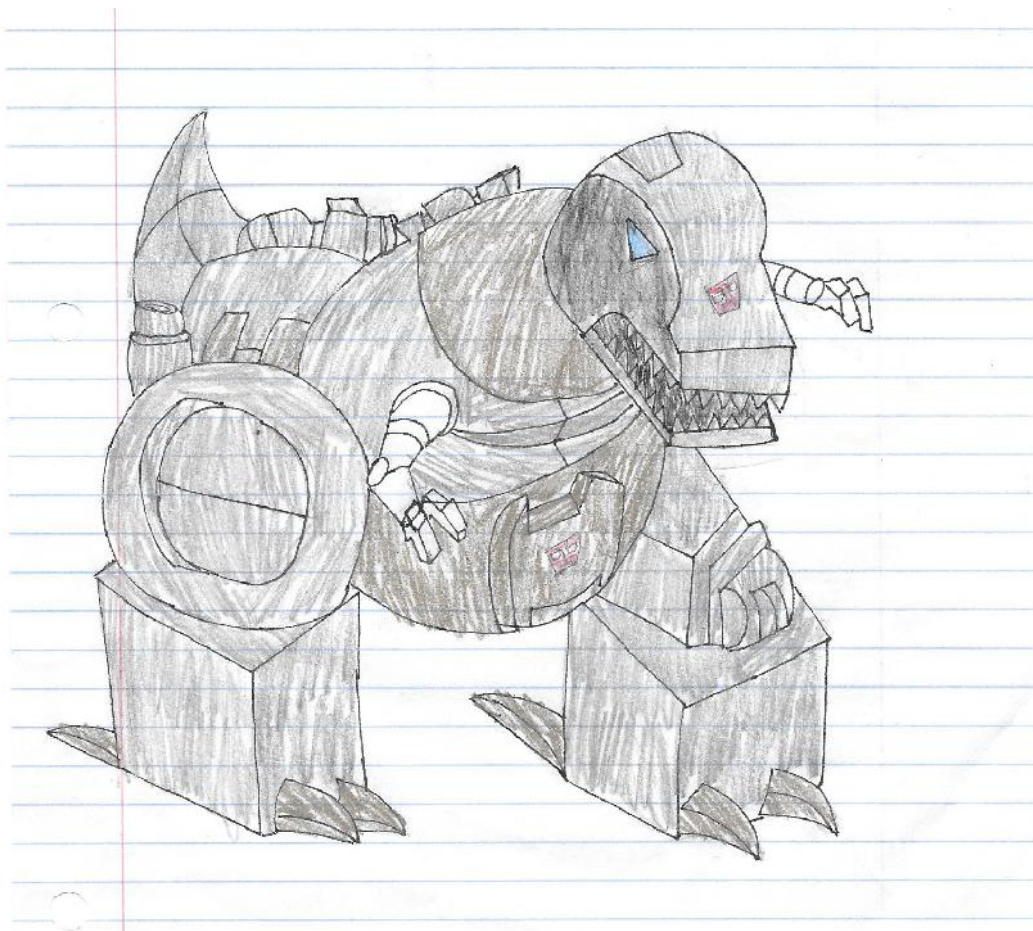
Unaware of my presence,  
Invisible to your heart.  
Ignorant to my shouts.  
You continue walking on.

Lovely Stone Boy,  
Gentle beautiful thing,  
When will you ever see me?  
I continue to wait patiently.



# DINOBOT GRIMLOCK

ASHLEY MILLER







# TEARS

ASIYAH MARDIYYAH ARASTU

Sometimes they plan an ambush  
When you're vulnerable and weak;  
Conspire to make you speechless  
When you're obliged to speak.

Sometimes they derail you,  
Snag you unawares.  
And just as you clamber out  
To snatch a breath of fresh air,  
They plunge you back into darkness,  
Into woeful disrepair.

The slightest provocation—  
The tiniest bump or nudge or tug—  
Sends everything tumbling down again—  
Even a warm and well-meant hug.  
Because as soon as those arms enfold you,  
And a kind voice asks what's wrong,  
Sobs and sniffles storm the dam  
That's held them back so long.

But sometimes, the well is dry,  
Empty save for dust and rocks—  
As if against the cries of others,  
All avenues are blocked;  
As if others' misfortunes are  
Naught but figures drawn in chalk...  
You try to coax forth a tear;  
You are denied, deserted, mocked.  
You wonder, "How tarnished is my heart?"

"That it feels neither pain nor shock?  
"How petty, selfish, unfeeling?  
"To all pain but mine, hardened, locked."

Then there's the time they finally come,  
On little cat feet,  
With a feather-dusting of goosebumps  
And a flutter in your heartbeat;  
When something melts inside,  
Something sharp and bittersweet;  
When something catches in your throat;  
Something wells up in your eye;  
Something slips from moistened lashes,  
And, at last, you cry.

Gently, gently, gently,  
One trickles down your face—  
Its glistening track a mark,  
A crystal gossamer trace  
That attests to your humanity;  
That is our saving grace.

With so delicate a touch  
And so fragile an embrace,  
At last-- the tears-- they come,  
At the right time and right place.  
You treasure that moment  
Of fulfillment, of renewal.  
The pang in your heart reassures you—  
Each tear a diamond jewel.

**GALAXY'S EYE**  
REBECCA VERCOUTEREN





# THE END

ANTHONY CLARK

The offerings the rows will give you  
The endless life, the age  
The thing that a machine can't give you  
The fundamental feeling, on a page.

The feeling a machine cannot provide  
No emotion, cold and alone  
They stand still, quiet, and tall  
Waiting, waiting for all.

The decision you choose to present them  
The decision for our time to spend  
Is it time for another good reading?  
Or is it time to say...  
The End.







# THE COMING OF AGE

EMMA VERCOUTEREN

It's the modern-day coming-of-age ceremony. I'll attempt to describe it for those of you who have yet to experience it and if you've been through it already see if you agree with my description.

You start outside the cave, blindfolded. A guide grabs your arm and takes you into the tunnel. You follow their instructions as they walk you to the start and if you're lucky they won't grip your arm too tightly. You walk for what seems like hours. Then you stop. In a moment the guide's hand is gone and you're alone.

Tentatively you reach up and take off the blindfold. Taking it off does nothing to improve your sight. Everything is pitch black. Maybe your heart starts to beat a little harder at this point. All you knew coming into this was that there are four stages, (there are names for each stage but if you're like me you didn't learn them until you were halfway through). You just need to make it through all four stages to find your way out and you pass.

It is bone-chillingly cold, dark, intensely silent. It takes some time to get used to the thick earthy smell.


The first level is bumpy. You take a few steps forward trip, and then repeat. You walk through this stage with a hunched back, arms reaching far out in front of you, feeling, groping for anything to help you orient yourself. If only you had a guide. You run your left hand along the wall. You do this tentatively, being careful

not to catch your fingers on it's rocky texture. You are in a corridor. You walk, slowly gaining confidence. Just when you finally think you might have a handle on things your hand touches something cold and sticky. You can say you won't scream, but you most likely will.

If you continue walking you will eventually stub your toe. That's the step up. The second level. You squint, have your eyes finally adjusted to the dark? Or did the maze just get incrementally lighter? The walls become smoother, or maybe your hands are so numb they don't feel the rough texture anymore. This is when your back straightens a little. You walk for a long while, then BANG! You collide with a wall, hitting your forehead onto it. You stopped putting your arms in front of you and so you didn't expect the dead end.

You turn, thinking that this is just a corner, but that's it, the maze just ends in a wall. You feel around frantically. Your heart had calmed down a little but it now spikes again. It is called a maze because each person's trail is a little different, but you have not encountered any alternative ways. Your path is set. So how could it just end?

Feeling the wall that blocks the path you find ledges in the rock. The wall is not flat, it slopes away from you. Standing still for a moment you hear the slight whistle of moving air. A warm draft floats down from above. Something clicks and you start climbing. You clamber up from ledge to ledge, then you can faintly see that you have



passed through a hole in the ceiling. You keep climbing. You can not afford to fall. You start to become clammy, a combination of sweat and cold underground air.

At the top of the sloping wall, you flop onto the trail which continues on as if nothing just happened. But something is different. The world is brighter. Precious light allows you to see the walls and tunnel. You can see a curve in the trail up ahead. The trail on the last stage is probably harder than the first level but it seems easy. You might jog. When you turn that last corner, you see the opening of the tunnel. To your dilated eyes it seems to be just a patch of light with nothing beyond, but you know better; everything is beyond.

It's a sprint. No matter how slow you go that last stretch goes by too fast. In a moment you are stepping from the tunnel into the blinding light of the outdoors. In one gust the fresh air of the world replaces the stale air of the tunnel.

You stand there in awe, at least for a moment. The world feels different now. Now that you've graduated.

Now that you know what the journey was like you can think of a dozen ways you could have done it differently. You know where you could have gone faster, been stronger, done something smarter.

But hindsight's always 20/20.

Those of us who have made it through high school now see that it wasn't as scary as we first thought. We can be proud of how we finished the maze, of how we stuck to it and finished. We know there are things we could have done better, but a perspective we must keep in mind is that with the knowledge we have earned we can now attack life with speed, strength, and brains, applying the lessons from our previous successes and failures to the future journey.

To those of you just starting out in the darkest part of the maze, you now have a glimpse of what high school might be like. It can be dark, you will most likely bump your head against a few walls. But the effort you put into each stage directly equates to the lessons you can apply to later adventures.

I am very grateful to have made it through the maze of high school, I have learned so much and I am actually sad to say goodbye. I feel like there is so much more I have to learn, but this story represents my hope that we can continue to learn and grow outside of high school. After all, this is only a doorway, the first step of many.

High school is The Coming of Age.









# CREATIVITY

ERINN KARIS





# CONGRATS GRAD!

YANITZI ARROYO

*yanitzi arroyo*





# SPIDER SQUIRTLE

ELISE MILLER



HAPPY  
SUMMER

