

MENTOR'S NOTE



"Something wicked this way comes!" Issue 11: Spooky Stories called for the best spine-tingling writing, art, and photography (and our talented young creatives answered the call)!

Lit Kids Magazine came to life in 2024 with the mission to shine a spotlight on the creative abilities of 5 to 13-year-old kids and provide them with an avenue for publication. We publish four issues each year featuring stories, poetry, non-fiction, art, and photography from all over the world. Our team of mentors spends a month working alongside the children to prepare their pieces for publication. Not only does this process give young talent an in-depth experience with the publishing industry, but it also establishes a platform to encourage kids to stay creative!

Issue 11: Spooky Stories is the perfect prelude to the autumn season, waiting to jump scare us just around the corner. These talented kids didn't shy away from the darkness of the shadows, instead aiming their flashlights directly at the monsters and ghouls which haunt our nightmares. Every kid knows what it is to feel scared, but this issue proves they also know how to maneuver their fear, even in their darkest days. Within Issue 11's pages, you'll find frightening tales of self-discovery in the midst of monster chaos, photos of everyday horror appreciation, and drawings that capture the essence of the word "spooktacular." As you navigate the newest issue, gather unshakeable courage within you as these kids do when facing their fears head-on!

If you believe in the *Lit Kids Magazine* mission, please help us congratulate the many children who contributed to Issue 11 on their amazing work! And don't forget to share this issue with any horror enthusiasts you know and love. Your continued support (paired with their undeniable talent) makes this publication possible. Keep shining!

Happy Reading,
Rebecca Weber
Lit Kids Magazine's Mentor-In-Chief

P.S. Know any 5 to 13-year-old writers, artists, or photographers who deserve publication? Please share our website with them and subscribe for updates on future open submissions or issue releases. We open to

submissions on a quarterly basis, and we're excited to feature young talent! As always, thank you for your ongoing support!



WRITING



Finn Rotert is a second-grade student with a love for reading graphic novels and playing tackle football. *Last Kids on Earth* and *Hilo* are two of his favorites. This is his third time being published. He has other work in *Nimblewitlit*. He loves his dogs Ophelia and Otis and loves playing with Nerf guns.

The Boy Who Went to a Portal

by Finn Rotert

One day, a boy called to his mom. The boy said, "Mom, something is creepy. It is a portal to another dimension."
His mom came to check. She saw it and didn't know what it was. So she looked inside the portal. It was really bloody. She looked out of the portal. "We have to get rid of this portal," she said.
The mom had a diamond pickaxe because she was a miner. She used her pickaxe on the portal. The portal broke. They went to bed thinking it was all better.
When they fell asleep, a smear of blood dripped down the wall.

The End



Samantha Scaduto is 13 years old, and a student at William T. Rogers Middle School in Kings Park, New York. Some of her favorite hobbies are playing guitar, writing songs and poems, and reading.

The House on the Hill

by Samantha Scaduto

There is a house on the hill

Where nobody goes

And they say college kids

Were killed in its halls

And they tell their children

In the town down below

That there's a house on the hill

Where nobody goes

There is a house on the hill

Where nobody goes

And they say animals

Are found dead on its grounds

And they tell the hunters

From the town down below

That there's a house on the hill

Where nobody goes

There is a house on the hill

Where nobody goes

And they say wolves howl

In the surrounding woods

And they tell the shepherds

On the fields down below

That there's a house on the hill

Where nobody goes

There is a house on the hill

Where nobody goes

And they say lights burn on

In the windows of rooms

And they tell the stories

Around fires down below

That there's a house on the hill

Where nobody goes

There is a house on the hill

Where nobody goes

And an old, lonely man

Lives alone in its walls

And he sits at his window

And watches all the land down below

From his old, creaking house

Where nobody will go.

Nathaniel Tong is ten years old and was born in Arizona. He is currently a fifth grader in Illinois and enjoys reading and biking in his neighborhood. He wrote *Nightmares* because he likes to read and watch scary books and TV shows like *"Stranger Things."*

Nightmares

by Nathaniel Tong

I was playing Geometry Dash in my room on my bed. My eyes were fixed on the screen as the icon dodged spikes and saws. The level I was playing, Bloodbath, was one of the game's most iconic and hard levels. The icon flew through an outcropping of spikes when all of a sudden, I heard the familiar sound of the icon dying.

"NOOOOOO!" I shouted. I'd just died at thirty-two percent, which wasn't very impressive to begin with, but I had failed there so many times I'd lost count "I would've beat it!! I would've beat it!" I slammed my computer shut trying to control my anger.

My eyes felt heavy and I decided I should get to bed. I shut off the lights and pulled my blanket over me. I fell asleep to the sound of silence.

Dreams plagued me like usual, more specifically nightmares. I was in my school except no one was there. Lockers hung open and padlocks were broken on the floor as if someone had ripped apart everything.

As I walked through the hallways trying to find a clue as to why everything was like this, I turned a corner, and found a weird stain on the floor that looked like dried paint…or something else.

Just as I walked around the puddle, I almost had a heart attack when I heard a bloodcurdling scream. I spun around to find nothing but a shadow. "Hello?" I asked shakily. I walked towards the shadow expecting to see someone. The weird stain from earlier was gone.

I started to panic. I ran through the hallways as fast as I could. I heard more screams behind me and they were getting louder. I ran into a classroom that I didn't recognize. I slammed the door, found a chair,

and jammed it under the door handle. Exhausted, I slumped against the wall when all of a sudden something screamed next to me!

A pool of sweat surrounded me as I sat up, realizing that it must've been a dream. I climbed out of my bed and went into the bathroom to brush my teeth. Then I opened my computer and got on Geometry Dash. Instead of the usual title screen, there was my name, Nathaniel, smack dab in the middle of it. This wouldn't have been too strange except the letters were spread across a spiderweb of cracks on the screen. "What the-?" I spun around thinking I had heard something. I ran out of my room and into my parents' bedroom. There was nothing. I ran back out into the hallway and shouted, "MOM? DAD? EMMA?" There was no response. Then it hit me: This was a dream! I had somehow had the nightmare then dreamed I had woken up!

I had to get out of this horrible nightmare. In desperation I whipped open the front door and burst outside. Again, I heard a scream! I started to run from it. It was closing on me fast. I turned a corner and found myself coming up on Mulliken Park. I hurdled the slide, jumped onto the bench and scrambled up the Big Pine.

The Big Pine was the only pine tree in the entire park, and it was humongous with needly branches and sturdy limbs that made excellent seats.

The lowest branch was right in front of me so I leapt onto the huge plant like I was a squirrel. But the thing was right behind me. I sensed it coming closer and closer and then it screamed: "Wake up!! Wake up!!" I closed my eyes and when I opened them, I was staring at the ceiling of my room. I heard it again and realized it was my dad calling me for school.

I jumped out of my bed and yelled, "Coming!!" I ran downstairs, ate breakfast then tripped on the stairs as I rushed to go brush my teeth. I changed my clothes and got ready for school.

Abigail Houlihan (9) is a fourth grader from California who loves turkey vultures, chicken nuggets, and her family. She likes to play and never wants to grow up.

Medusa

by Abigail Houlihan

Mean

Enchantress

Dead

Ugly

Snakey hair

Appalling

Simon is 10 years old, in 4th grade. He enjoys swimming and playing with his older brother.

Lawley Publishing published his book - *Story Power!* (coauthored with his grandma Stephanie Wildman). He is the sole author of this story.

Lost Souls

by Simon Chung

The green car suddenly roared into life on a rampage. It was like a massacre of traffic lights and signs. The sleek nightmare was cruising under the shine of the moon.

A few blocks away from the previous night's catastrophe, a little boy and his friend Matilda were walking home from school. "Matilda," Frank said, "I think we're lost." It was true Frank's house was nowhere near where they were.

They walked a few blocks and then determined that they were really lost.

On the block, there were many obstacles. Trees were uprooted and sprawled across the street. A lawn had tire marks all over it. Power lines were toppled over, and traffic lights were bent. "Why are all these trees uprooted?" Matilda asked.

"I don't know, but this place is in ruins," Frank said.

"It's almost dusk, so we should get moving," Matilda said.

An hour later, the two of them still couldn't find their destination. "Let's camp for the night by that green car. I don't think we'll make it home," Matilda suggested.

Vvvvrrrrrrroom!

"What was that?" Once more the monstrosity came alive, ready to terrorize people until it reached its goal. "Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhh," Matilda screeched.

"Must find companion must find companion," the car whispered.

"What did it say!?!" Matilda asked.

"Something about companions, I think," Frank said. "Hey, car, if you want companions, we'll be yours if you stop terrorizing people."

"Really," the car wondered, *"You'd do that for a haunted car?"*

"Sure, but only if you're nice," Matilda replied cautiously.

"Of course, my name is Ghoul."

"I'm Frank, and this is my friend Matilda. We're lost."

"Would you like a ride home? I could navigate well with my built-in GPS," Ghoul suggested.

"That would be great, thanks," Frank agreed.

The moral of this story is don't judge a book by its cover. This means that you shouldn't determine who someone is without meeting them.



Graham is 9 years old and lives in Nashville. His favorite things are playing games with his friends at school and in his neighborhood, writing stories, making comics, and performing music.

Wake Up

by Graham Christiano

The boy lay in bed, eyes staring at the ceiling, sleep pulled on him. The house was silent. Too silent, like it was holding its breath.

Then…a *crack*. Sharp and sudden.

His eyes snapped open.

He didn't move. The sound echoed through the house, and sank into the walls, like it was meant to be there. Like it had returned.

A thought came into his mind, "Did I forget to lock the door?"

Before he could answer himself, his bedroom door creaked.

Not pushed. Not opened. Creeped.

Slowly, it opened on its own. And then…

Something stood there.

A figure. Completely black. Not just shadow, something darker, deeper, heavier. It stepped inside.

The air grew heavy and hard to breathe.

The boy tried to move, but he couldn't. His chest tightened as the thing drifted closer… until it stood beside his bed.

It didn't reach for him. It just watched.

The longer it stared, the more wrong it felt, like it wasn't just looking at him, but in him.

Then…a hand burst out from under the bed.

Pale, thin, and too long to be human.

It grabbed his ankle. Cold shot through his body, and he was dragged down into the mattress. He tried to scream, but no sound came out.

He woke up.

Standing, not in his room. A hallway stretched before him, endless, black, suffocating. The walls seemed to breathe, closing in, and making the space feel alive.

There was no way back. Only forward.

His footsteps echoed, but something was wrong.

There was another echo a half a second after his.

He stopped and the second echo took one more step.

He didn't look back. He walked faster.

At the end of the hallway sat a single object. It was a bed.

The air around it felt thick, like stepping into deep water. Every instinct told him not to get in, but there was nothing else. No doors. No escape. Only the bed.

He lay down.

The moment his eyes closed. Footsteps. He jolted awake. Nothing.

Again, he lay down. Again, the footsteps returned.

Each time he closed his eyes, they followed. Each time he woke, they were nearer.

He tried to stay awake, but something forced his eyes shut every time, dragging him back down.

Until finally, the footsteps stopped right beside him.

He tried to wake up, but his body wouldn't respond.

Something was standing over him.

He felt it before he saw it, a weight pressing down on his chest, making it impossible to breathe.

A shape leaned into view, tall and thin.

Its face moved and twisted like it couldn't decide what it was supposed to be.

It bent closer. Closer. Close enough that he could feel it breathing. Then suddenly…

He woke up in his bed.

His real bed. His real house.

He gasped, sitting upright, heart slamming against his chest.

"Just a dream…" he whispered.

But it felt wrong. It was too quiet.

He looked out the window. Fog. Thick. Endless. Swallowing everything.

And beyond it…nothing. The neighborhood was gone.

Houses…erased. Except his and one other. The silence outside was worse than any sound.

Smiling, he stepped out, his legs shaking and walked toward the only other house. The door stood open, waiting. Inside, a man stood perfectly still.

"I've been expecting you. I was trying to harness the power of life. To understand it…I needed someone to study," he said calmly.

His eyes didn't blink.

"But now," he continued, stepping closer, "I'm finished."

The air grew colder.

“I don’t need you anymore,” he said.

The boy tried to move.

He couldn’t. Not even a finger.

“Don’t worry,” the man said softly, almost gently.

“This was all just a dream…and you’re never waking up.”

Bailey Soja is a fun-loving and adventurous 10-year-old who enjoys spending time outdoors and surrounded by the animals she loves. She especially enjoys horseback riding, riding her four wheeler, and playing baseball. Bailey keeps a special place in her heart for horses and wiener dogs. When she’s not exploring outside, Bailey loves reading, drawing, and expressing creativity through arts and crafts. Most of all, she treasures time with her family, cousins, and friends–making memories, sharing laughs, and enjoying every adventure along the way.

Lexi Henderson is a 13-year-old gymnast who absolutely lives for the sport she loves. As a dedicated member of a traveling gymnastics team, Lexi thrives on the excitement of the competition, learning new skills, and pushing herself to reach new goals. Her biggest dream is to one day become an Olympic gymnast and represent her country on the world’s biggest stage. When she’s not in the gym, Lexi loves spending time with her friends and family, creating arts and crafts, telling stories, and enjoying fun sleepovers.

The Secret Lair

by Bailey Soja and Lexi Henderson

There were four kids walking home from school one day, when Johnny saw something shiny in the forest. He walked over to see what it was. When Johnny went to pick up the shiny object, the floor opened underneath him, and he fell into a secret lair.

The three other kids noticed that he was gone, and they saw footprints leading up to the woods. Then, the footprints ended, and they started banging on the ground and realized the ground was hollow. When Bentley banged really hard on the ground, the floor dropped open, and he and the two girls fell into the secret lair with Johnny.

They noticed Johnny was tied up just before they saw a man in a black suit wearing a creepy mask. The creepy man hit the three kids with a wood bat until they fell to the ground unconscious. When they woke up, they were back on the sidewalk walking home with Johnny. As they walked, a creepy man waved goodbye. When they got home, everything felt normal– just scarier. They didn’t sleep for days.

Bentley Soja is an adventurous 11-year-old who loves being active and spending time outdoors. He enjoys riding his dirt bike, playing baseball, and playing football. This summer he was especially proud to make his baseball All-Star team. When he's not playing sports, Bentley enjoys fishing, spending time with his family, and exploring all kinds of outdoor activities. He is also a self-proclaimed video game aficionado who loves getting lost in the world of games, as well as reading graphic novels, comic books, and mystery stories. Above all, Bentley is an energetic, curious, and fun-loving kid who enjoys trying new things and making memories with the people he loves.

Dog Man

by Bentley Soja

One Halloween night, there were four men staying at their family cabin. Their names were Nolan, Mason, Bentley and Carter. That night, they were passing out Halloween candy. They did this every Halloween for years. For years, little creepy things kept happening.

This year, the creepy activities leveled up. There were red marks on trees, big paw prints on the ground, and a big werewolf named Dog Man. (Dog Man crept up to the cabin where Bentley, Mason, Nolan and Carter were staying that night after passing out Halloween candy.)

The boys started to watch a scary movie, when they heard scratching on the window. *Scratch, scratch, scratch!* Just then, at the front door, they all heard *tap, tap, tap*! They opened the door, looked outside and saw Dog Man holding an ax outside the west side of the house. Dog Man started running at them full speed! The boys slammed the door closed, locked the windows and the door.

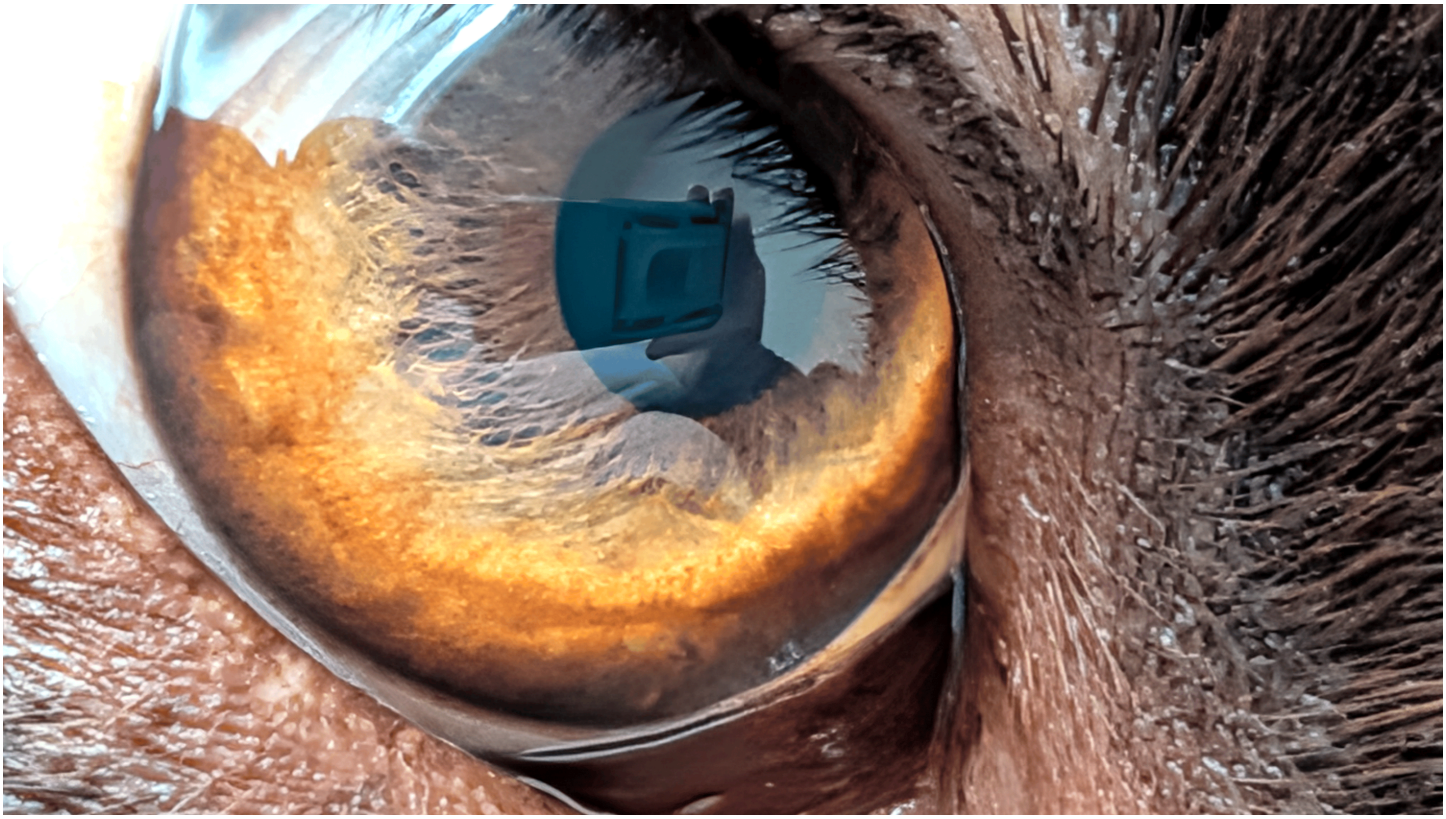
Later that night they heard screeching later that night on the east side of the house by the woods. They came outside and saw red eyes looking at them from the trees. It started running at them again! They ran to their car, drove away and never came back.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Finn Rotert is a second-grade student with a love for reading graphic novels and playing tackle football. *Last Kids on Earth* and *Hilo* are two of his favorites. This is his third time being published. He has other work in *Nimblewitlit*. He loves his dogs Ophelia and Otis and loves playing with Nerf guns.

The Eye

by Finn Rotert



Stanley is 6 years old and loves learning new things. He enjoys arts and crafts, video games and board games, and spending time with his family. His dream is to be a racecar driver when he grows up.

Skellington

by Stanley Doughty





ART



Finn Rotert is a second-grade student with a love for reading graphic novels and playing tackle football. *Last Kids on Earth* and *Hilo* are two of his favorites. This is his third time being published. He has other work in *Nimblewitlit*. He loves his dogs Ophelia and Otis and loves playing with Nerf guns.

Freddy Fazbear

by Finn Rotert



Alioth is a third grader with a lifelong love for art, character creation, and bringing the worlds in his imagination to life. From as early as he can remember, creating has been a natural way for him to express himself, explore his ideas, and navigate big feelings. Art isn't simply something Alioth enjoys—it is a passion he has always known he wants to pursue.
As the oldest of a little brother and an army of cousins who look up to him, Alioth carries a natural sense of leadership.
Through his artwork and character creations, Alioth shares both sides of himself: his tender heart and his unstoppable imagination. His art is a reflection of who he is—a compassionate young artist with a powerful creative spirit and a fire that continues to grow.

Red Moon Haunting

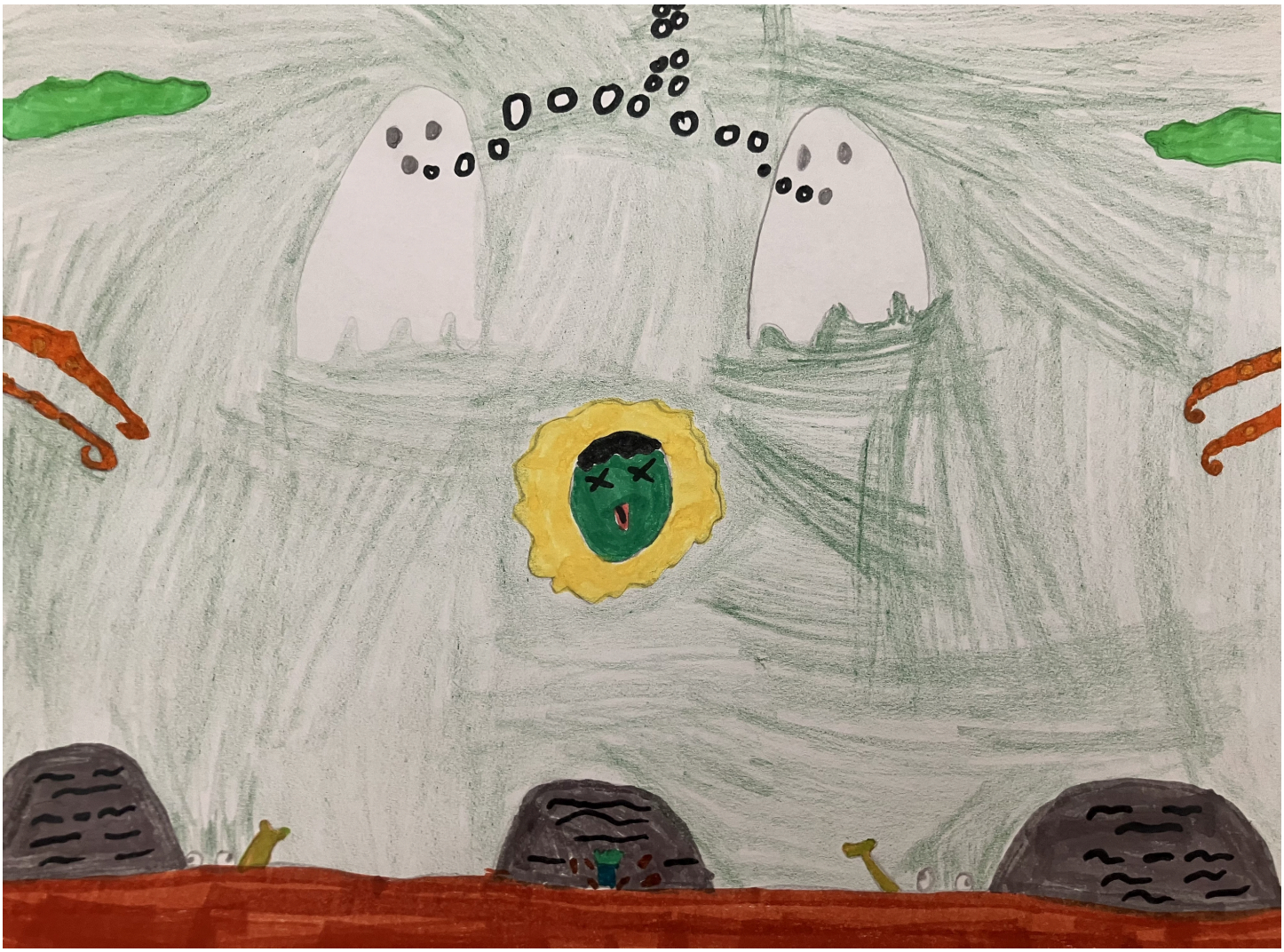
by Alioth Beeler-Greer



Abigail Houlihan (9) is a fourth grader from California who loves turkey vultures, chicken nuggets, and her family. She likes to play and never wants to grow up.

Symmetrical Cemetery

by Abigail Houlihan



Ethan Houlihan is seven years old. He likes to eat candy, use the iPad, and play with his family.

The Death Night

by Ethan Houlihan



Paloma is 13 years old and is from Nashville. She has a variety of interests, including but not limited to: making and drinking tea, reading, drawing, and painting.

A Midnight Delivery

by Paloma Christiano



THE END

(Only spooky vibes allowed!)