THE MIDDLE IMAGE 2026

ALBION MIDDLE SCHOOL

LITERARY MAGAZINE

THANK YOU TO THE STUDENT AUTHORS WHOSE WORK APPEARS IN THE 2026 *MIDDLE IMAGE*:

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Hailey Dunn
Avery Faskel
Ellady Fisher
Jackson Frasier
Jackson Gaines
Ahnna Gomez
Emma Hammons
Logan Hammons
Kinzie Healy
Robbie Hickman
Caleb Himes
Connor Hinckley
Gianna Hyde
Drayden Johnson
Leighton Kincaid
Hannah Klein
Marcel Lamar
Eva Mateo
Bentley McAvoy
Kristeauna McGuire
Ally McQuay
Maleana Mengs
Autumn Morici
Alice Munsen
Chase Nellist
Elexa Pahura
Brian Patten
Dixie Payne
Brycen Potter
Mason Rotthoff
Paysen Sanders
Liam Skowneski
Maelynn Taylor
Serenity Turner
Aydin Vallejo
John Vivas
Melanie Viza

My mother once told me
that fear is like a shadow.
It follows you around quietly
especially
on days you feel
small.
I tried to pretend I didn't notice it
walking fast
looking straight ahead
but
it always caught up to me
and sometimes it still does.

- Marcel Lamar

I once was afraid
Walking into that building
It's like we were in PreK again
Holding my books
clinging them to my chest
Praying no one remembers last year
A girl ran into me knocking my books to the ground
She keeps apologizing
I said
It's fine
I don't mind

- Kristeauna McGuire

My mother once told me
that the world would test my heart
In moments of doubt when the road disappears
That courage is quiet and often must start
When strength feels too small and hope hides in fears
She said even heroes feel lost in the dark
But they carry a flame, a stubborn small spark
if I'd ever be brave like them
She smiled and said I was
sometimes I still am.

- Melanie Viza

I once was afraid
Of shadows that stretched down the hall at night
Of questions with answers I couldn’t hold
Of dreams that felt bigger than my light
But courage grew quiet and slow in me
Like dawn learning how to become the day
I walk a little braver now than I was
sometimes I still am

- Ally McQuay

The Art Of Letting Go.

And while you're filled with
pain, anger, and sorrow,
who knows if they'll be here tomorrow?
So don't fight
don’t scream
don’t fill up with steam,
Relax, just breathe.

Let the weight of the world
slip off your shoulders,
Let the fire inside turn to ash
and cold embers.
The clock keeps its pace,
life isn't a race.
just find peace in the quiet of this hollow space.
just be.
and breathe.

- Kinzie Healy

The weather kept getting hotter
and the sun stayed out too long,
we rode our bikes past dinner
and didn’t care we were gone.

The pavement burned our sneakers,
but we laughed and kept the pace,
racing shadows down the street
with the wind against our face.

Someone yelled it was getting late,
but none of us agreed,
we wanted one more minute
of that fast and easy speed—

like the earth of the summer beneath.

- Liam Skowneski

I once was afraid
Of the thunderstorms
Rumbling through the town
Darkening the clouds

I couldn’t tell you why I was afraid
Whether it was the loud boom
The lightning it would bring
Or the darkness

One thing I do know
Is that a storm is creeping in
I tell people I’m unafraid
That it’ll pass

There is secretly a part of me
Who doubts myself
No matter what I tell myself to try to be unafraid
Sometimes I still am

- Luci Borello

After I won the game
I ran to my parents
I thanked them
I rode in the car
I sometimes forget
Everything they do
But I didn't
Today I wouldn't forget
I would never forget
It would never happen again
Never to be repeated

- Robbie Hickman

In bleak December, dark and dreary, the dim year disappears,
Frail Elias, pale and a child, felt fear draw near—so near.
Whispers, whispers wound the walls, soft and sly they say,
“Elias… Elias…” echo, echo—won’t fade away.
Tap-tap, tap-tap—tight and bright his trembling heart would hear.
A watching, waiting, winding will was always, always near.
A figure formed from frost and flame
eyes like a lighting storm that bored into you,
fierce and fast it came—
It lunged, it lunged—yet calm, strange calm.
He fell, he fell to winter’s will, to winter’s waiting lap,
yet warmth within, a gentle glow, lay softly in its wrap.
No pain, no pain in the crimson stain, no silver, stinging frost—
Just velvet weight of waning light, no sense of something lost.
His final breath, so slow, so soft, in golden silence spun…
In winter’s grasp, in quiet clasp—he felt only the sun.

- Elexa Pahura

Sadness of Suffering
Feel impelled
I shall be no more
lack of confidence
Engaging
Faltering
Suffering
unbounded love for you my darling
happiness of those I loved
I lived and loved

- Jackson Frasier

I shall be no more,
My lack of confidence is helping them,
The debt we owe to them,
My blood and suffering is for them,
I feel death has called upon me to feel
Weak,
Dishonorable,
Tired,
I am chained to the battlefield for I can’t move,
I can feel myself burn to ashes for them,
For the dead have taken me to feel,
In the darkest night,
The dimmest memories shine the brightest.

- Brian Patten

INSPIRED BY THE SULLIVAN BALLOU LETTER

Standing for my country.
A pure love of my country and of the principles I have,
Often advocated before the people and the name of honor,
That I fear more than death has called upon me,
And I have obeyed.
Yet my love of Country,
Comes over me like a strong wind,
And bears me irresistibly on with all these chains,
To the battlefield.

- Drayden Johnson

Musket smoke.
Death scent.
Wounded soldier groans.
Down-spiraling hope.
Throat-metallic taste.
War outbreak.

- Mason Rotthoff

As time
Climbed over
The top of

The scene
First the night
sky

Silently
Then the stars
Stepped away

Into the loneliness of
The lonesome
abyss

- Bentley McAvoy

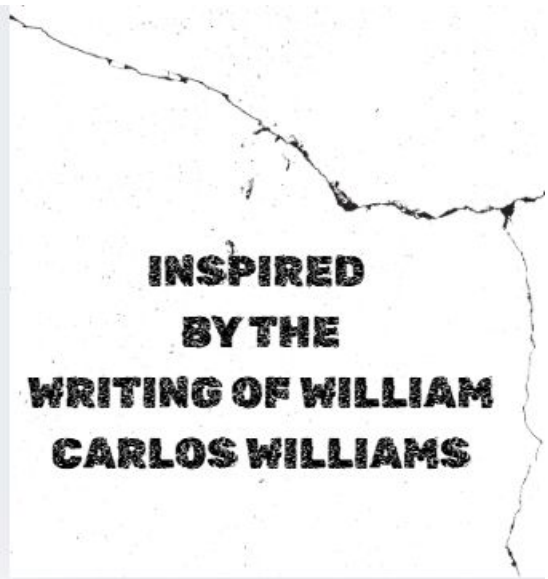
As the storm
climbed on
the top of

the mortals
first the bright lightning
struck

badly
then the intense rain
stepped heavily

into the mind of
the dumbfounded
creatures.

- John Vivas



As the moon
Climbed on the night sky
The top of
the moon

First the stars twinkled in the
dark

Weak
Then the cow
Stepped on the moon

Into the holes of
The hammered
moon

- Aydin Vallejo

As the person
climbed over
the top of

the cliff
first the stones
crumbled

carefully
then the brightness
stepped up

into the world of
the cold
unknown.

- Avery Faskel

Darkness

As the car
climbed on
the center of

the track
first the train
sounded

loudly
then the car
stepped down

into the blackness of
the pitch black
night.

- Logan Hammons

Last days

As the man
Climbed in
The center of

The greenhouse
First his foot fell
Then hands

Steeply
Then the head left
Stepping

Into the garden of
The graceful
Eden

- Brian Patten

I have run
The school
That was in
The town

And which
You were probably
Saving
For yourself

Forgive me
It was wrong
So unforgiving
And so hopeless

- Maelynn Taylor

I have buried
The notes
That were in
The dead heart

And which
You were probably
Saving
For your true love,
Who is now not me

Forgive me
It was hateful
So fake
And so true

- Autumn Morici

Restless waves
Fish filled water
Seals' calls
Sand on my feet
Salty air
Peaceful

- Madalyn Crouser

Kids playing happily
Fresh air
Balls clanging against bats
Dirt on my face
Wind blowing
Past as I stand here

- Ellady Fisher

The wet green grass
The freshness of rain
The sound of an intense softball game
My bat hits the softball
Pride and happiness
How free I feel when I run

- Maelynn Taylor

Waves thrashing around
tranquilizing, calm, peaceful
Running full of hope

- Jackson Gaines

Bright sun glistens on
Quiet sand beach in summer
As summer sun sets

- Joshua Deuel

too weak

tore off

eyes in terror

sweaty with shame.

on his face

- Hailey Dunn

As he trudged

Mr. Lucas

waddled asking

A person

an example

of

a crush

on

buttered rolls,

and

They love it.

- Chase Nellist

scared he

saw

Her

arrive

brave

He

asked

Tres bien.

Parlez-vous francais?

uncertainly

He

was

asked to repeat what he said

- Emma Hammons



impressive
show The

twirling with many
intricate and artful movements

made a fine picture

but

midway the man
slowed
with a

reassuring

little

rant

The man
pale, square-jawed face keen eyes

oddly set.

- Caleb Himes

The

chilly rain

cast

a fine

peace

all-night

a man

walked up

to

a restaurant

and lit his cigar.

- Madalyn Crouser

the wind
puffs passengers
hurried along

a thousand miles to an appointment,

he
cried in the door.

his own fate was certain

- Connor Hinckley

two brothers,

fortune dragged
earth

and time

destiny worked and fortunes made,

time
lost

the world. came a thousand
miles to stand in this door

waiting with
small diamonds.

- Autumn Morici

Emotions are normal, we all feel them indeed.
We all gather courage when everyone is in need.
We all have an anger that some people feed.
We all have a sadness that continues to spread.
We all have embarrassment that makes us turn red.
We all have a heart that beats with surprise,
And all of that is hidden behind human eyes.

- Naomi Jane Burns

Sadness is the color blue
It smells like expired milk
It tastes like salty tears after a big fight
It sounds like rain falling from high in the sky
It feels like a knife through your heart
Sadness is like drowning in your own tears

- Eva Mateo

Jealousy is the color orange.
Jealousy smells like bitter perfume lingering too long.
It tastes like sour candy burning your tongue.
It sounds like your mind is bickering in your ear.
It feels like a knot in your stomach.
Jealousy is a storm in my mind.

- Paysen Sanders

Sorrow is dark and moody grey
It smells like wet concrete on a rainy day
It tastes like the salty tears of a quiet sob
It sounds like the growing darkness of sorrow and despair in a lost soul
It feels like loss of all hope and love
Sorrow is a darkness scarier than an inescapable nightmare

- Joshua Deuel

Excitement is the color dandelion yellow
It smells like an aroma of brand new crayons and markers
It tastes like childhood wonder
It sounds like hummingbirds in the morning
It feels like the first drop an a rollercoaster
Excitement is everything

- Alice Munsen

Joy is the color purple
It smells like fresh vanilla cupcakes with colorful sprinkles
It tastes like a rainbow popsicle on a humid summer day
It sounds like someone saying you got first place in a race
It feels like getting the present you asked for on your birthday
Joy is a field of beautiful flowers

- Hannah Klein

Happiness is the color of neon blue skies.
It smells like beautiful roses in the breeze.
It tastes like blue raspberry rock candy.
It sounds like waves crashing against the shore.
It feels like you're on a rollercoaster during the drop.
Happiness is a summer day.

- Serenity Turner

Fear is the color black, like the unfortunate world you are stuck in
It smells like the damp ground after rainfall
It tastes just like salty uncontrollable tears streaming down your face
It sounds like a silenced cry for help
It feels as you've been thrown overboard; drowning, no way back up
Fear is a secret bottled up, and locked away

- Cora Bane

Depression is the color of dark indigo
It smells like a puddle in the now dull moonlight
It tastes of tears, salty and flowing in a useless attempt of calm
It sounds like rain drip-drip-dripping against the dead grass, agonizingly soft
It feels like a stab in the chest, digging at your soul
Depression is nothingness, yet everything all at once

- Oak Daniels

Guilt is the color black
It smells like regret and sorrow
It tastes like a sour lemon
It sounds like someone who doesn't deserve faith
It feels like a room with no oxygen
Guilt is poison going through your body

- Ahnna Gomez

Calm is the color pastel yellow
It smells like laying on fresh cut grass
It tastes like drinking hot chocolate
when you come back inside after playing in the snow
It sounds like taking a nap with rain falling on my window
It feels like reading a book in a hammock
Calm is tanning on the beach

- Leighton Kincaid

Love is ruby red
It smells like roses and milk chocolate fresh from a store.
It tastes like warm vanilla
It sounds like fireworks in your heart
It feels like butterflies in your stomach
Love is a warm hug

- Dixie Payne

Growing up
Day by day year by year
You get older and older
Your stuffed animals start slowly
And slowly getting thrown away.
The toys you used to play with are just
Sitting in a bin collecting dust over the years.
But aren't those the toys you said you would
Play with forever, aren't they?
Your birthday presents go from Barbie dolls to makeup
The dresses you used to wear are now considered “cringy”
The shoes you used to wear are now considered “ugly”
And suddenly without noticing it happening
You just grew up without saying goodbye.

- Paysen Sanders

Blooms
Flowers bloom during the Spring, trees do, too.
Kids do after elementary school.
Why do adults not bloom?
Is it because their petals are old and broken?
Or simply because there is not enough sunshine or light reaching their stem?
Adults usually carry heavy burdens, like rocks.
So maybe that's it.
Big, heavy, rocks can crush the petals, roots,
or even the seeds that float in the breeze.
When those rocks crush the flower's seed
then, that seed will have a hard time blooming, too.
Sometimes there's too much rain and it drowns the flower out,
But without that same rain that might almost kill it,
It wouldn't grow or bloom either.
Sometimes a lot of that rain can produce a rainbow.
That lets you see the beauty of the world around you.
There's still more reasons that a flower might not bloom
If there are too many weeds it'll choke the great flower waiting to bloom.
Sometimes those weeds are so ruthless
and just suck the life right out of that awaiting flower.
Other times there might be birds
that pick away at the things that help the bloomers bloom!
Like the sweet inside,
because once you get to the inside,
the flower becomes vulnerable.
So, when you get there, be careful or the flower won't bloom.

- Maleana Mengs

I like to swim,
but I drift too far.
I slip under
no air,
can’t breathe,
still there.
The water pulls,
I dive too deep.

The surface shimmers
just out of reach,
light bending soft
above the dark.
My limbs grow heavy,
slow and numb,
as silence wraps
around my heart.

I trace the quiet
in the blue,
where sound dissolves
and time stands still.
No waves, no wind,
no distant shore
just endless depth,
just endless pull.

And somewhere far
above it all,
the world goes on
without a sound.
I like to swim,
but I drift too far
and find myself
beneath it now.

- Esmae Capurso

The moon needed to shine,
The only star to do that was the sun,
But the sun was too focused on Earth,
To notice the moon's pleading

The sun thinks the Earth is more important,
But in reality,
The moon and the Earth both matter,
They are both just as valid,
So is the sun

They make the beautiful temperatures,
And the days and nights,
The sun is so blind to see,
The validity

- Gianna Hyde

The infinite void cast out in front of me
the absence of gravity lifting throughout the galaxy
the comets blasting through the eternal darkness
the eyes staring at me from the planet i once lived on
the air that is seeping from my suit
i am alone and no one can help me

- Caleb Himes

My soul is in sorrow
missing my maiden whose name was Dekuisha Money
She was my honey who meant everything to me
I am coveting the loss, can't you see?
She was a child of the seraphs of heaven
I wish my Dekuisha Money was here, I wish, I wish, I wish
How could I be so oblivious to this devious deed?
He must have had a pitiless heart of endless greed
Oh, Dekuisha Money, you will be missed

- Brycen Potter

Dekuisha was not my honey nor was she funny.
I hate Dekuisha Money so much it isn't even funny.
I hate her and her fate, I hate, I hate, I hate.
I hope her dreams of heavenly themes are purged.
Weep and whine will come in just a matter of time.
Time of mine that will fly by and pierce her right in the eye.
Her eye of greed from her devious deed of stealing from thee.
Her time is short unlike this cliff, the cliff of her end.
My heart runs cold as her body goes stiff.
Oh, Dekuisha Money, you will not be missed.

- Liam Skowneski