Using his final strength, and a special knowledge that was deep inside him, Jonas found the sled that was waiting for them at the top of the hill. Numbly his hands fumbled for the rope. He settled himself on the sled and hugged Gabe close. The hill was steep but the snow was powdery and soft, and he knew that this time there would be no ice, no fall, no pain. Inside his freezing body, his heart surged with hope. They started down. Jonas felt himself losing consciousness and with his whole being willed himself to stay upright atop the sled, clutching Gabriel, keeping him safe. The runners sliced through the snow and the wind whipped at his face as they sped in a straight line through an incision that seemed to lead to the final destination, the place that he had always felt was waiting, the Elsewhere that held their future and their past. He forced his eyes open as they went downward, downward, sliding, and all at once he could see lights, and he recognized them now. He knew they were shining through the windows of rooms, that they were the red, blue, and yellow lights that twinkled from trees in places where families created and kept memories, where they celebrated love. Downward, downward, faster and faster Suddenly he was aware with certainty and joy that below, ahead, they were waiting for him, and that they were waiting, too, for the baby. For the first time, he heard something that he knew to be music. He heard people singing. Behind him, across vast distances of space and time, from the place he had left, he thought he heard music too. But perhaps it was only an echo.

a very s[illegible] very modern cotta[illegible]

"You're right," Xena replied. "This [illegible]'t be the Bathe[illegible]se. It's too new."

"Oh, but it is, young lady," a voice behind them said. They turned. A middle-aged woman [illegible]oking at them with sparkling gre[illegible] opened the gate and let herself in. She [illegible] close the gate, but neither did she invite them and she kept one [illegible] on the latch, holding a shopping bag in the other ha[illegible]

"Are [illegible] Emerson[illegible]a asked.

"I am [illegible] woman said. "A[illegible]an I do f[illegible] you?"

[illegible]g a proje[illegible]

[illegible]e-eyed [illegible]

spec[illegible]

[illegible] extra re[illegible]it

[illegible]ling, o[illegible]

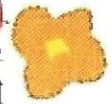
[illegible]Holmes,

[illegible]now?"

I want them to know that safety should not be the defining virtue of their lives, while they want me to know that being alive should be the defining virtue of their lives. I closed my eyes and tried to remember what it felt like to be scared in that swamp a thousand years ago. Had I truly believed the thing I saw in the water was a head attached to a body attached to a tail that, as the Lord said to Job, can make the deep boil? Would my father really have asked me to go near such a thing? Of course not. Maybe. We buried Pop not far from here, and it would've been possible to turn the boat up into the channel and paddle all the way to his grave, through a few cuts in the marsh. It might've taken all day, and we had so little water and no food, but what an adventure to arm our way through tidewater toward the man's body, to do a foolish thing in honor of the man who'd taught his children to love foolish things, a love that has led me to the waters off Key West and the gorges of the Gila Wilderness and the glacial waters of the Wind River Range, places I never would've gone without a father to make me get out of the boat that day, in the Genesis of my manhood. I am frightened of almost nothing now, except my brother's mullet, which haunts me still. "Shark!" the six-year old screamed. "Is that really a shark?" the eight-year-old said. "It could be a dolphin," I said. "Let's see." We waited, but no happy, child-friendly aquatic mammal breached before us. Just a fin, a single, purposeful, somewhat overly serious, perhaps ectothermic, possibly murderous dorsal fin, arrowing across the lambent ripples of midday while my children gripped the sides of the boat and asked me questions about the shark that I could not possibly know. What kind was it? How big was it? Did it want to eat them? Which one of them did it want to eat? What could we do so as not to be eaten by it? Could I kill it? Could they stay in the boat while I killed it? Can we paddle faster toward the beach? Is there a motor on this kayak? If so, can we use it to kill the shark? Why aren't you paddling? "Get your knife, dad," one of them said. "If one of you gets eaten, we will name the boat after you," I said. The eight-year-old turned and gave me a look that said, Is my father an idiot for bringing us out here? Of course not. Maybe. "I won't let it hurt you." They stopped and thought, frozen. I turned our boat, and we paddled toward the monster in the water.

Victoria Ramirez
7th grade

We walked along by pastures where sheep were grazing—white ones and black ones, grown ones and little lambs [redacted] learning to walk. [redacted] they were sweet,



[redacted] the stillness of the forest. [redacted] the smell of grass and pines in smoke. [redacted] just keep walking as if he could walk to the end of the world. [redacted] My sandals were tight and hurt my feet. [redacted]

8th grade

Ibarra

[redacted]

[redacted] I shone my light on it and saw a niche that had been carved into the rock. [redacted] on the bed was a skeleton.

He was all delicate white bones. [redacted] Scattered among his ribs and the loose bones of his hands were black beads that must have been a necklace.

His skull [redacted] hidden under a mask of green stone, [redacted] eyes bluer than the sky [redacted]

The lips of the mask were gently smiling. I touched them. They were smooth as water.

Above the forehead, [redacted] shape of a bird—a bird with a fine, narrow beak and outspread wings. I caught my breath. It was a colibrí. The bird that I was named for.

A hummingbird is fearless. If it must, it will fight something a thousand times bigger than it. And people say that when the bravest ancestors died in battle, their spirits flew to the next world, and they are still in that world, immortal hummingbirds.

I touched the stone wings, the beak, the eyes. I touched

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7th - Sproul - Leonard

Taylor 719. Adult

CHAPTER XIII

BROKEN

sisters

could

collapsed

wondered

any more

looked

broken

cheeks

stained

lipstick

smudged

her

still

heart

fix

the

ringlets.

makeup

the

feathers

in

the

hair

dresses.

beautiful

cascade

silver stars.

the

night sky.

closed

eyes.

open.

want

to

forget

I hope

silent

sisters.

motionless

on the floor

a chill

heart.

afraid

pocket. pocket

pocket.

fancy

pockets

round

people have passports a lot

people can't get

passport

no problem he can get

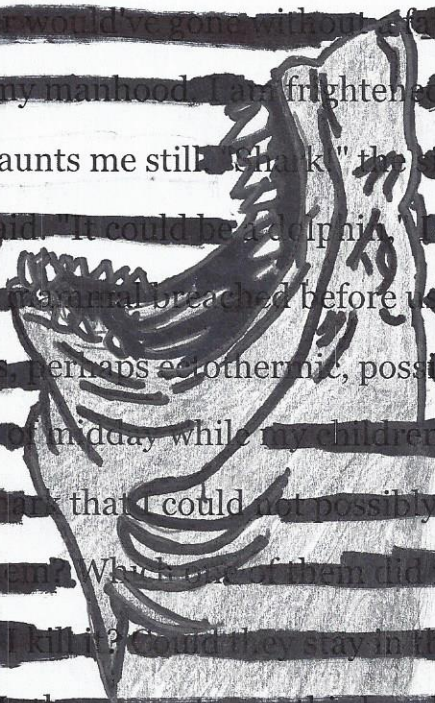
passport made

of

value.

"The shark"

I want them to know [redacted] being alive [redacted] felt like [redacted] tidewater [redacted] the man's body [redacted] haunts me still [redacted] "Shark," the six-year-old screamed. "Is that really a shark?" the eight-year-old said. "It could be a dolphin," [redacted] said. "Let's see." We waited, [redacted] before us. Just a fin, a single, [redacted] possibly murderous dorsal fin, [redacted] while my children gripped the sides of the boat [redacted] that I could not possibly know. What kind was it? [redacted] I killed it [redacted] the shark? Why aren't you paddling? "Get your knife, dad," one of them said. "If one of you [redacted] "I won't [redacted] you." They stopped and thought, frozen. I turned our boat, and we paddled toward [redacted]



[redacted] "intimate accounts" [redacted] In [redacted] imagination [redacted] a [redacted] romance [redacted] was a magician with [redacted] power [redacted] to disappear the world. [redacted] I drifted [redacted] like steeping tea. [redacted]

[redacted] a kind of umbilical cord [redacted] linked me to [redacted] songs and poems, a [redacted] pool [redacted] brimming [redacted] raw matter [redacted] foaming, [redacted] afraid that I might [redacted] die of feeling too much [redacted]

[redacted] transcendent [redacted]

[redacted] transformation [redacted]

[redacted]

She explained. "They'll indicate the days, the months, the years, involved in your obsession. The ancestors will be present, too. They'll tell me more."

She laid the seeds in a heap on the table and asked Uncle to pick up as many as he could with one sweep of his right hand.

"Don't concentrate," she said. "Just gather some."

Uncle's eyes glittered the way they had when he looked at the chickens in the lane. He was calculating, figuring out how to gather every last seed. He grabbed so many he couldn't hold them all and some dribbled from his cupped fist.

"Don't worry, these don't matter." Sensing the error, she set the spilled seeds to one side. She told Uncle to put those he still held in a mound in the middle of the table.

She arranged the little red seeds in groups of two, in five rows. In the last little pile, there was only one seed. She studied the arrangement and she put all the seeds he gathered, including the ones she'd set aside. She had Uncle pick up as many seeds as he could a second time. Those, too, she arranged in rows—four rows of paired seeds. Again, one seed was left over, sitting by itself.

She considered the seed one more time, then put it back away in her bag, and kissed it reverently.

Uncle eyed the bag on the table, waiting for her to speak, his eyes big in the shadows of the room.

"Because your question is whether you will be rich or poor, I can't tell."

Doche
8th grade

wonderland Jonathon H

So she sat on, with closed eyes, and half believed herself in Wonderland, though she knew she had but to open them again and all would change to dull reality—the grass would be only rustling in the wind, and the pool rippling to the waving of the reeds—the rattling teacups would change to tinkling sheep-bells, and the Queen's shrill cries to the voice of the shepherd boy—and the sneeze of the baby, the shriek of the Gryphon, and all the other noises, would change (she knew) to the confused clamour of the busy farm-yard—while the lowing of the cattle in the distance would take the place of the Mock Turtle's heavy sobs. Lastly, she pictured to herself how this same little sister of hers would, in the after-time, be herself a grown woman ; and how she would keep, through all her riper years, the simple and loving heart of her childhood : and how she would gather about her other little children, and make their eyes bright and eager with many a strange tale, perhaps even with the dream of Wonderland of long-ago : and how she would feel with all their simple sorrows, and find a pleasure in all their simple joys, remembering her own child-life, and the happy summer days.

grade >

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Gregory Age 14, 8th grade

[redacted]

"The night is black, [redacted] The sculptor's cat was black as well [redacted]

[redacted] It was late and they were alone in the streets. [redacted]

"And the stars!" [redacted] "Have you ever before beheld them so bright?"

[redacted]

"*Too* bright for my liking. Aye, blinding, they are!"

[redacted] Fitfully, he glowed and dimmed, as if he were made of starlight himself.

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LOVED

The look in his eyes was [redacted] pure.

[redacted] beautiful creature God has made, the one that does no harm to anybody!

Not dirty like most

he [redacted]

He smiled [redacted]

HURT

I couldn't talk; I just shook my head.

Tears welled up in my eyes.

I couldn't say anything. I couldn't even shake my head nymore, [redacted] I was sure [redacted]

it was real.

Abigail

Abigail Purvis

7th grade

Stewart Age: 14 6th - 8th

astounding truth: while Miss Catchfly was busy, and at great personal risk, Juliana had secretly given him an extra nutmeg—as a sign of her love.

In awe he examined the seventh nutmeg. He closed his eyes and sniffed it deeply. Entrusting it at last to his pocket, Nicholas drifted down the street while the amazing fact, flowerlike, gradually unfolded itself.

Juliana, he now realized, had only *appeared* to ignore him entirely every time he came into the shop. In truth, the girl was simply shy. Words did not come easily to her, so she spoke instead in the language at hand—the language of nutmegs and cornmeal and cloves.

Nicholas walked along in a daze, marveling at Juliana's courage—courage called forth on his behalf. Had Miss Catchfly caught her she'd have snatched her bareheaded. Why, that woman would just as soon bite herself as part with a shilling, or a speck of her flour. No doubt Juliana had planned the deed for days—or weeks, or even months!

Nicholas crossed a street, stopped, and plucked the nutmeg from his pocket. Hypnotized, he stared at it blankly, seeing in it, as if in a crystal ball, Juliana's image. Then all of a sudden his jaw dropped open.

She'd worn flowers—he recalled it clearly. Honeysuckle, he believed it was. And at once he thought back to a volume he'd opened in Mr. Flinders' bookshop one day—a volume devoted to the lore of flowers, in-