

# English I Pieces

2001-2002

## Smeed

by Toby Johnson

This summer, my Grandpa gave our family a male Basset Hound puppy. My Grandpa acquired the puppy when his dog, a Visla named Jenny, gave birth to one puppy. That same day, a sick Basset hound gave birth to a litter of seven. The mother did not have the strength to raise all of them, so my Grandpa volunteered Jenny to be their surrogate mother. Two of the Basset Hound puppies died after a few days, and every week after that the biological mother gained enough strength to reclaim two puppies. Within a month, the owner had taken back all of the puppies but one, which she gave to my Grandpa in gratitude for raising them.

My Grandpa said that he did not need another dog, so he gave the Basset Hound to us. We spent a long time deciding what to name him. After a family discussion, we eliminated Turpentine, Vladamier, King Louis, and the runner-up, Moose, to decide on Smeed, a name that we had seen on a street sign near Caldwell.

Smeed is difficult to train. He is now four months old and still is not housebroken, despite all the precautions we take. He has extremely quick metabolism, so we take him outside once he has consumed any amount of food or liquid. We have had to build a barrier that is ten feet long just to keep him from going on the carpet. After reading a dog book with a chapter on Basset Hounds, we found that they are very stubborn dogs and like to have own way.

Smeed has difficulty moving fast because he has short stubby legs, and huge ears that he trips over whenever he tries to run. Smeed is very heavy. Although he is only about one fourth the size of a Labrador, he weighs over half as much one. Despite Smeed's stubbornness, we are glad to have him in our family.

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## A Child World

by Erica Laidlaw

"immature-  
juvenile-  
naïve-"

## The Meadow

by Nick Pace

The wind whisks the spring-green leaves;  
a few maple trees whistle so slightly in the cold breeze.  
Crickets and grasshoppers chirp in damp grass.  
Silent but graceful,  
deer graze on fertile ground.  
As sparrows and robins circle the field,  
the sun begins to set:  
animals leave by foot and wing.  
Finally, the meadow lies pitch black.  
Frogs and insects awaken; calling for mates,  
waiting for the sun to  
rise.

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## A Wonderful Companion

by Ian Faurot

Molly's coat envelopes her like a blanket  
of autumn leaves, except  
for the day she tiptoed through white paint, splashing  
some on her chest. Her  
big brown eyes glow warm, always  
looking up at you with both  
ears perked and head tilted; she's  
my best buddy.

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## Last Surf

by Sarah Armstrong

Kaiko and I had been friends ever since I could remember. Living in the tourist heaven of Hawaii gave me a different perspective on life. I had the idea that the world was centered around me and where I lived. This suggested that life in general was created as a tropical dream and would always be that way. Life was treating us well at that time of our teen years, and it seemed that nothing could go wrong. The summer before our senior year of high school would be one to remember; Kaiko and I were to make sure of it. If we had only known what we would have to go

criticism from the wise adults,  
veiling jealousy-  
for only children are ignorant to horrors of our  
society.  
For only children are so idealistic,  
where saving the world from evil is a daily task.  
For only children can be uplifted by an oozing ice cream  
cone.

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## The Twinkie Battle

by Nick Pace

It was a cold night in Voska, Russia. Unfortunately, Jim hardly had any shelter. Instead, he lived in a dumpster full of cardboard boxes next to a large factory. The dumpster wasn't that smelly inside, like most dumpsters that smelled of rotting food. Instead, it smelled sort of like carbon dioxide, since the workers didn't throw too much food in it. Jim was quite lucky to have such a home, since most street kids in Voska had none. The only downside to the dumpster was that it was small and crammed.

Jim usually scavenged for food on the streets. He possessed only two hundred dollars in cash, which he had saved as a kid to buy a computer. Of course, he would never be able to buy one, since he was stuck just buying food. He was a good saver for an average, fourteen year-old street kid.

He was not born a street kid. Neither were his parents. In fact, his parents were very wealthy. He was used to being spoiled with wealth. But all that changed when he was eight years old. His parents were killed on their way to some destination he couldn't remember particularly. He remembered that the car engine froze. His father went to check it out. Then muggers came out and murdered his father and his mother. But Jim escaped. The back car window was open so he was able to crawl out. He heard gunshots, but he was still alive, if not well. He walked all the way to Voska. It was the closest town to the accident, but sometimes, he regretted going there.

He never really ventured far from his dumpster because the last time he did he almost lost his two hundred dollars to an older street kid who tried to rob him. He never used his savings except for clothes, sometimes. He never stole. He hardly ever begged because he had gotten used to the right survival techniques. So he lived simply. He knew a couple of street kids. But only one of them was one he would call a friend. His name was Jake, and Jim didn't like him that much. He was basically a punk who had run

through in the months that followed.

We woke one morning to a calm sea resting at the front door of Kaiko's little home on the cove. After finishing our relaxing and scrumptious breakfast of fresh mangos, pineapple, pancakes and coconut syrup, we waxed our boards and prepared to spend the day surfing. Lunch was packed, the car was loaded, and although we were getting a later start than we had hoped, I figured we would be fine, since there seemed to be no breeze.

We drove around to the opposite side of the island where the surf was normally up, and where the locals occasionally surfed. When we arrived, we had the whole beach to ourselves, which pleased us very much. Being the young boys that we were, all we wanted to do was surf our hearts out, and forget about any problems we had. To tell the truth, we really did not have many complications in our reality, though we liked to think we did. Kaiko parked the car and we packed our boards down to the beach to begin our day.

The surf was perfect for surfers of our ability. Both Kaiko and I were extremely good, considering we had only been surfing seriously for two years. By the time the salty, seaweed-scented afternoon breeze had picked up, both Kaiko and I were ready to rest our worn out bodies, which had taken a beating from the powerful waves. The water had been so enjoyably warm and, although anything but refreshed, we were still tempted to try to conquer the ocean one last time. This attempt failed and we decided it was best to leave before the wind picked up.

The quarter mile walk back to the car with our boards seemed to last forever, however, our chattering kept us fairly busy. Loading our surfboards was a challenge for the both of us, considering our arms were so tired from paddling out to where the surf broke. Before we journeyed home, Kaiko and I found some of his dad's beer in our lunch cooler. We figured that if we went easy on the alcohol, we could successfully make it home safely, with one of us as a designated driver. But as we continued to drink, the amount of alcohol we took in was not vividly clear to us.

We drove back on a narrow, windy road with one side a sheer drop into the Pacific Ocean, and the other a vertical wall of rock. Kaiko had been a typical high school driver, but it never really phased either of us that we could really put ourselves in danger due to this fact. This thought kept my stomach from jumping out through my throat as we rounded each corner.

away from home because he was fed up with his school and his parents. Jake never really talked about it too much, but it really didn't seem to matter, since Jim tried to avoid him.

Jake was about a year older than Jim. He wore an ear piercing and one tongue pierce. He was pretty tough, and was able to edge off even the biggest of kids. He usually picked on other kids, but he seemed to like Jim, for some reason.

Jim was very cold. An icy chill filled his head as he inhaled, but it didn't feel that bad. He had already survived eight winters. He was hungry. There wasn't much trash around. But he was desperate for food. So he started to scavenge out in the alley.

He didn't want to go too far, just so the police or the bigger kids didn't notice him. So he walked to the nearest alley to see if trash was still lying around. And that's when Jim saw it: his favorite junk food, a Twinkie still in the wrapper. Even as a kid, Jim had always like Twinkies. Even if these treats were dirty, they were still excellent because of the preservative stuff inside them. It was a very tempting treat.

But just before he picked it up, he saw Jake in the corner of the alley. Jake never really smiled that much; in fact, he usually frowned, but this was different. He looked fierce in a way. And then Jake said, "Drop the Twinkie, squirt."

"What?" asked Jim, confused.

"You heard me, drop it," commanded Jake.

"No, tough beans, I found it," said Jim.

Jake gave Jim a good mean look straight in the eye and clenched his fists. "Not any more."

"Jake charged. He was a fast kid who could take on a guy five years older. Unfortunately, Jim wasn't. Jake threw a punch right in Jim's face. Jim fell to the rough concrete below. Blood gushed out of Jim's nose. He felt a kick in the shins as Jake grabbed the Twinkie.

Jim was so angry that he grabbed Jake and head-locked him, knocking him to the ground. He was so angry that he ripped off Jake's piercing, leaving the tough kid screaming in pain and cursing in Russian and English. It was a long fight that seemed endless as the two street kids came out of the alley and into the streets. People were screaming in

We turned a blind corner; waiting at the end was a pickup truck on the side of the road with a flat tire. Due to the width of the road, he was parked in the middle of the road. Without truly thinking, Kaiko swerved and smashed our car not only into the truck, but also into the rock wall.

What seemed like a moment later, I opened my eyes and reached for the door handle. I stepped out and was immediately surrounded by a group of EMTs who appeared to be in great distress. My eyes frantically searched for Kaiko, but could not find his face in the crowd. I whipped around to face the now-destroyed car to find Kaiko's body thrown toward the dashboard, laying and bloody. My legs grew weak and my breathing became panicky and uneven; each struggling breath hurt as I fought back hot, sticky tears. I watched helplessly as the EMTs climbed into our car and struggled to pull Kaiko free. After setting him gently on the pavement, they checked his pulse. I instantly knew he was gone.

It hit me like a rolling boulder. This was it. No more fun, no more games. I finally realized that I had to grow up. Life was serious, and because we had not taken it as seriously as it should have been taken, Kaiko had lost his life. This was not like a tropical dream anymore; it was more along the lines of a barren desert without any water. Our lives would not last forever, and I had not realized this painful, yet important fact until now. We had both made a mistake of drinking the alcohol; however, I had the chance to learn from it, but Kaiko did not. My life with Kaiko had been cut short due to our irresponsible actions.

Although I knew that it was not my fault that Kaiko had died, I felt one-hundred percent guilty just knowing that I was there with him. I vowed as I watched his body being placed in the ambulance that I would never make a mistake like this again. Drinking and driving only dug a hole deeper than I could climb out of. Every day counts, so, for Kaiko, I would live life to its fullest.

## **The Perfect Thing**

by Tyler Bork

The only thing perfect in this world is my red VW Jetta. My Jetta baby is like a girlfriend to me. I take care of it as if it were the sweetest girl in the world. I wash my baby once a week, and wax it once every three months. With the new exhaust system on it, my car sounds so sweet, it blends with the sound of my car audio system. The red of my Jetta girl just catches girls' eyes. I like that when I'm cruising, thumping with the tunes, and just hanging out at Father's. The perfect car in the world should be showed off

terror, one woman even covered her two kids eyes so they wouldn't see the violence. Then came a familiar sound, a siren, as a police car came up.

Jake and Jim raced back to the alley, but it was too late. The police had caught up with them. A few seconds later, Jake and Jim were in handcuffs and in the police car headed for the station.

One policeman turned around in the front seat. "So who are your parents?"

"We don't have any. We're orphans," said Jim

"What were you two fighting about?" said the other officer.

Jim was about to say, "A Twinkie," but that seemed like something nobody would believe. "Money," he answered.

The officer turned to Jake. "Is this true?" He nodded, which was surprising, because Jim was almost certain that Jake would blab. But then Jim smiled. Yes, he would have to go to jail. But it was better than the streets. He would sleep on a real cot and they would at least serve clean food. After that, he might go to an orphanage, and possibly a family would accept him. Who knows, maybe it would be good in the end.

#### Epilogue:

Jim and Jake's prison sentence was two months. After that, two families accepted them. Jim lived with his adoptive family for three years before setting off to own an Italian Restaurant that was successful. Jake wasn't so lucky. Two years after his stay with his new family, he committed suicide. Jim usually doesn't remember too much about the times in the streets because it was so painful. But he still loves Twinkies, and has a hard time not buying them.

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### Last Days

by Sarah Armstrong

Falling gently to the ground,  
summer's last leaf departs a group  
of hawthorn trees.  
Slivers of late afternoon sun  
light up vivid, squash-colored leaves, sprinkled  
evenly upon naked,

with a perfect girl in the passenger seat!!

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### Dear Diary

by Erica Laidlaw

January 28

Why, Why do I feel such emotions? Our interests share nothing. Our goals are so diverse. He is irrational while I am the epitome of rationality. He is naïve while I am wise. He is bursting with such foolish remarks, yet I cannot help being amused by his juvenile statements. Being in his presence is a wonderful pain. My heart is drowning in a sea of love. Yet my intellect is staying clear of such hazardous waters, for it knows better than to get caught up in these entrancing waves. I cannot handle such feelings. I cannot see him tomorrow.

January 30

Two days have passed, and nothing has been said between us; not even a gesture of hello. Does he not feel the agony that I do? Is he not torn inside when I pass? For I grieve every moment he strolls by in the hallways, as he plays that foolish game, the game of deceiving love. He struts and acts merry, while chirping to his friends, when truly his heart is in torture. He is a mighty man for concealing his pain; I do praise him for possessing such sportsmanship. And I feel I have lost to him. Tomorrow I must confront him, and confess my true emotions.

January 31

That DECIEVING, foolish boy! He denies ever feeling any emotions towards me. Yet he maliciously smiles and stares at me in class. It was true love. He could not lay eyes upon anyone but me. Even though we were never physically interactive or ever conversed, how could he not love me? It is a match meant to be. I can't help that we never formally met, or even met at all, except the day of my confession, but the bond between our souls is fate. He is to me a lighthouse in a white squall at sea: he is my savior, and I assumed he felt the same for me. Who thought a man could play such sporting scams. But I am a true player and can see through his immature acts. He is only fooling himself, for he cannot acknowledge his true love for me.

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uneven ground.

Old, lifeless leaves crunch with  
each cautious, heavy step: filling  
nippy, bland-tasting air  
with dry, musky, silent smells.  
Startling, plebeian birds show  
their last signs of summer life,  
leaving behind lifeless nests.  
Visible breath precedes a natural death;  
soon to invade with its white, silvery blanket.

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### Perfection

by Erica Laidlaw

Perfection is adapting to one's surroundings and performing tasks in the most efficient manner. Out of all natural and man-crafted products, one tiny element comes to mind that well describes perfection: a rain droplet. As it plummets from the cloud, it forms an effective aerodynamic shape. Whatever the weather is, the droplet adapts by conforming its shape to the conditions. As it hits the ground, it splatters in all directions, slowly navigating the cracks and crevasses of the ground to the lowest floor it can possibly find. Many other droplets find this precise location and build a pond. Soon, as the storm passes, this puddle evaporates into the sky to begin a whole new cycle. Our entire ecosystem relies on this cycle. A single rain droplet can adapt to all its surroundings, efficiently forming a resourceful water cycle for our whole world.

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## Strategic Computer Games

by Nick Pace

Strategic computer games are any type of game that involves commanding different virtual objects using tactical strategy. Although I play lots of other computer games that are fun, I like strategy games best.

Most of the strategy games I play are militaristic, based on commanding troops, ships, and other military units. Usually, this type of game starts with an aerial view of a certain landscape with different forms of elevation and terrain, such as grass, sand, trees, and water. Some games even allow you to create your own scenarios and campaigns.

Strategy programs do involve conflict, as do most computer games. In war games, players act as if they are a god or a powerful leader controlling each unit or structure by using basic tactics. Each unit or structure has certain attributes that force the player to make careful decisions about how to use his or her forces. Also, each unit is associated with a cost of use, depending on what the unit can do.

Not all strategy games are related to war. One of the best-selling computer games is the Sim City series. The plot of this educational game is to build an urban empire of a city with the player acting as Mayor. The Mayor manages everything a city experiences, from demolition to construction, from disasters such as tornadoes, floods, fires, and other disasters, to pollution. This stimulating game is interesting for both kids and adults.

Most war games usually follow a narrative storyline. The games almost seem like interactive movies. For example, in *Age of Empires*, the *Campaign of Ancient Egypt* begins with the colonization of the Nile and ends with the invasion of Canaan. In this simulation game, the player is a god.

Computer games can either be challenging or easy, but they are fun. Some games that I would recommend are: The *Age of Empires* series, The *Command and Conquer* series, and *Starcraft*.