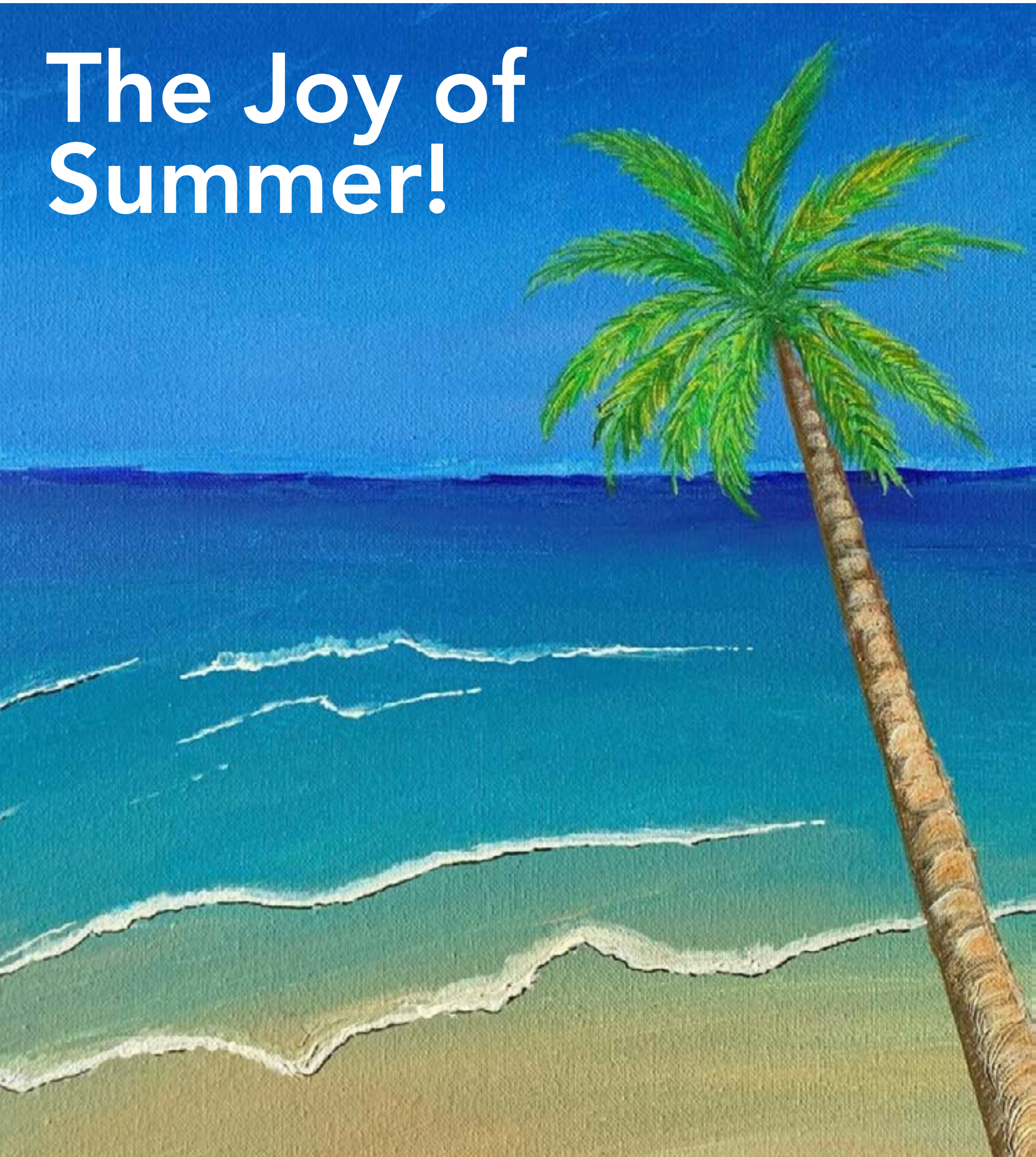


iWRITER

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By Kids, For Kids Magazine

The Joy of Summer!



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Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Summer is finally in full swing; the days are longer than ever, the grass is greener than ever, and the entire world feels more saturated than ever. As the sunshine gives us a glow, the warm weather gives us the perfect opportunity to lay and bask with a good read by our side.

However, summer is anything but a stagnant season. This period of time marks a time of growth. Not only is nature all around us flourishing, but so are we.

As we find ourselves with more time on our hands through vacation from school, we can use summer as a time to branch out and discover more about our curiosities, passions, and even ourselves. Through these three months, summer is all about growing.

Just as summer and its adventures may look different for everyone, growth doesn't have a singular meaning. Whether that means traveling to a new location and all that it has to offer, practicing the depths of an activity you're enjoying, or learning how to perform various practical tasks, growth can be beautifully ambiguous.

In this issue, the iWRITER staff and I take a deep dive into what growth means to us by examining it through the lens of colors. Summer consists of a vast variety of shades, and throughout the pieces included in this issue, we're exploring what summer means to us in abstract ways and how we connect to it through a colorful perspective. With that, we are reminded of our world's infinite possibilities.

As you turn the page, you'll find yourself immersed in a large range of stories from intriguing tidbits to lighthearted yet meaningful stories. A colorful adventure awaits you; happy summer reading!

All the best,

Kate-Yeonjae Jeong

I WRITE because I have a passion for being able to share my reflections and thoughts with others. I write so I can share the spark of joy that writing gives with many other interested students.



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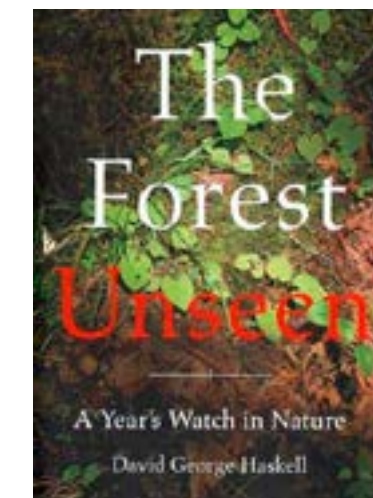
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What Summer Means to Us



We asked members of the iWRITER staff to share what summer means to them.

Shaivi Moparthy

Summer break is a time for growth where I can learn and experience new things. I always like to take time in the summer to reflect on the past school year, see where I grew, and what I can improve upon for the next year. It's also a time for me to relax, and take some time for myself. Summer gives me the unique opportunity to explore hobbies that I didn't have time for during the school year. I get to visit new places and experience different cultures as well. Summer is great because it lets me replenish and focus on other interests.

Kate-Yeonjae Jeong

I find that summer is a time of exploration; I'm constantly making new discoveries about all kinds of subjects and topics! During this break, I love learning new things that I can carry with me anywhere and everywhere that I go. Whether it be a new cupcake recipe or intriguing facts about nature, there is always something new to be educated on. I also love indulging in my hobbies and taking part in activities that I find joy in doing. Through this, I feel that summer allows me to try my hand at what interests me the most, and the season forms an integral part of who I am.

Sanjna Pandit

For me, summer is a time of recharging. After a busy year of school, the months of June, July, and August force me to take a breather and revel in the sweet joy of sitting on the couch with a fun book. There is no homework to be completed, no important places I need to be, no urgent deadlines to stay on top of. Summertime is a wonderful way to relax before the fall season kicks in and the non-stop aspect of youthful life resumes! When I think of summer, I also think about photographs. Whether traversing a glistening beachside at dusk or finishing the last steps of a mountain trek, these moments get captured in the form of a picture. Summer creates these new memories that are forever ingrained in my

life, ones that carry an extra-special weight when I am with those I love.

Nia Shetty

Summer is a period of time where I can be completely focused on myself and learn new things about not only new hobbies or interests, but about me. For me, summer is the time to take care of myself and devote time to self-care and self-love. Summer is also the time where I can go on exciting adventures and make lasting memories that last a lifetime. Summer flies by fast, so I make sure to cherish each and every part of it.

Tanvi Padala

Summer is meaningful to me because I embark on new adventures, learn new hobbies to be passionate about, and spend exciting times with friends and family members. With more time in hand, I learn and practice enjoyable activities like swimming, badminton, tennis, and ping pong within my community of friends and family. Also, summer presents great opportunities to travel to new and unusual places. This introduces me to rich and diverse cultures around the world. The summer holidays in the United States are special because of the experiences I can remember from them, like watching colorful fireworks burst across the sky with my family on warm summer nights as we listen to marching bands play patriotic songs in the distance.

David Liu

Summer for me is about chasing goals, self-improvement, and being open to as many new experiences as possible. So far this summer, I've rekindled my love for basketball, a sport I stopped playing when I was eight, and have begun to keep a journal that acts as a thought storage, helping me organize the random ideas that come from being a writer. As for goal-chasing, I have been trying to write more often and to stop binge-watching Youtube, drastically improving how effective I am during the day. I love summer, not only because it is a three-month stretch of relaxation, but also because it provides time for exploring areas that you might not have during the school year.

Eshaan Mani

To me, summer is a time of liberation, and as musician, Brian Wilson would say, "happy times and good sunshine." I'm freed from the constraints of the humdrum school schedule and allowed to explore areas that pique my interest, like learning about other cultures through travel,

discussion, and reading. I also cherish the quality time I get to spend with friends, whether writing screenplays and playing video games together, devouring "Buzzfeed Unsolved" episodes, or exploring new museum exhibits. And of course, precious time with family. Being able to break bread as a whole family almost every day of summer brings us closer.

Here's what iWRITE has been up to this summer!



Summer's Soaring Temperatures



This summer has been hotter than usual, to say the least. Over ten cities broke heat records in July, leading to a 'heat dome.' In Houston, we experienced a near drought during the start of summer. With no rain, Houston reached scorching temperatures, nearly surpassing one hundred degrees! But these conditions are not unknown to us. Over the last few years, extreme rising temperatures have been a worldwide phenomenon. We have also had unusually freezing temperatures and snowfall during the winter months here in Texas! So what is the culprit of this? The answer is climate change.

Climate change is the slow, natural change of temperature and weather patterns, but it has sped up over the last two hundred years due to human activities. This leads to more frequent and severe weather events. As a result, heat has been a growing problem this summer. The increase in temperature significantly impacts humans, leading to economic damage by disrupting factories and transport. Earth is warming faster than ever before, and it's time for us to take action.

World leaders have gathered to discuss this topic and are coming up with a plan for humanity to tackle this problem. The United

Nations also holds a yearly climate change summit to examine the effects of climate change and what action we can take to reduce its impact.

The Green New Deal is a proposal that politicians have made to make America run on 100% renewable energy. It suggests that we can shift our energy source to renewables and provide more jobs for millions of people within the next ten years. On the flip side, this method is incredibly expensive and will cost an estimated four hundred billion dollars annually. Even if the Green New Deal is not implemented within the projected time frame, the momentum behind it demonstrates hope for the future.

Although summer has been different for us compared to the past, scientists and global leaders are working on a solution to this ongoing problem. Everyone can play a part in reducing the effects of climate change. Check out the United Nations website to learn more about how you can reduce your carbon footprint this summer!

BY Shaivi Moparthy

I WRITE because writing is a way for me to express myself and it helps me connect to my artistic side. I enjoy writing because it allows me to reflect on experiences that I have encountered. Writing is something that I truly enjoy, and it has always been one of my greatest passions.

A Place for Poetry

Featured poems from the iWRITER staff

A FREE SUMMER

As the gleaming orange sun rises in the east,
the bright ocean blue water starts to ripple

The bustling commotion of laughter and chatter
echoes in the light of the morning sun

All around the world, people are embarking on adventures,
and making new memories
that will forever be engraved

Eyes opened to beautiful new cultures and cuisines
filled with rainbows of colors that have never been seen

Freshly sliced ripe mangoes, glistening watermelon,
and endless berries fill the tummies of those
all around the world

Golden sand stuck in between toes
and as cold water hits skin,
the beach,
will never get old

DAYBREAK

The sky is bright,
Filled with light
From the Sun.
The children play
All day
Till the Sun falls.
But then it rises,
Full of surprises
Of the day to come.
This cycle goes on
Until the Sun is gone —



BY Sanvi Pandit
I WRITE because writing is my way to share what I think and feel. Composing stories and poems helps me tell the world about myself without feeling scared.

Till the sky is only filled with stars.

Shiny red tomatoes, juicy mozzarella,
and sweet balsamic vinaigrette
on a hot summer day fulfills the tongue

Each and every summer is a different experience,
but it's up to you to decide what colors you want to see



BY Nia Shetty
I WRITE because of the joy I feel when I put a new idea down on paper. I write to be able to bring feelings and emotions to the reader, through ideas that I get to express.

SUMMER

she runs ahead of me,
skin grazed by the soft rays of sunlight,
face brightened by her
wide smile, reaching her ears,
her auburn hair,
glowing on the hot day,
yellow sundress
dancing in the summer breeze

blue
the brilliant blue of the sky
distracts
she fades
fades into the day
taking the sweltering heat with her

turning the lush green leaves
into yellow and brown crisps
as summer turns to fall

i still see the wisps of her shadow
she waves
the promise
to come back again next year

BY Prisha Shivani
I WRITE because it is a creative way of expressing your thoughts and ideas through words. iWRITE has given me the opportunity to write and publish, sharing my pieces with many people.



JULY

I.
Heat laps at the pavement
and cracks at my elbows—
inscribing lines into my ankles
and scuffing dust into my lungs

Spinning—
the world turning on its axis
We go hiking on dry cement,
inhaling waves of
baked air

We walk like limp marionettes,
dry tongues brushing parched lips—
burning the soles of our feet into
the sidewalk

II.
A fish is swimming through water—
swishing its tail onto
a canvas of white
Strokes of color
drip
drop
drip
down like rain
onto a now dirtied
wooden floor

III.
The ceiling fan
spins at a pace in which time flies
The atmosphere is
still, quiet

the AC whirs
through the silence.



BY Sophie Yu
I WRITE to let my thoughts, feelings, and ideas spread across the paper. To form and create a story that can be told in any perspective, described with any words. Writing can create a whole new world.

SUMMER REMINISCENCES: MEMORIES MADE ON MARVELOUS HOLIDAYS AND TRAVELING ADVENTURES

School Is Out

Students cheer ecstatically as they dart out of the school doors. Summer has finally commenced and kids can begin to chill. Many families trek across chilly tundras or dip on soothing shores. But best are the holidays and vacations that produce exhilarating thrills.

You are about to experience an adventurous and wonderful summer, from the magnificent holidays to the amazing places to travel to!

Flag Day

We celebrate our flag of fifty stars and colors red, blue, and white. It represents the strong and bold history and fight for independence and freedom. The flag is displayed as a sign of patriotism, peace, bravery, and might. We sing the national anthem dedicated to our flag to the melodic beats of the drums.

Father's Day

We appreciate our dads, whether it's with a special item or card. We ensure they have time to relax on their memorable day. We prepare their favorite meals: frozen, grilled, or charred. We surprise them with an activity they like to perform or play.

Summer Island

Many swim and cycle during balmy, humid days on a distant tropical island. While watching wild birds, reptiles, and monkeys pass by under a blazing sun. Families make memories together with a smile, in a mood that's now being lightened. The days slowly go by as families laugh and chat, though it seems it's just begun.

Snorkeling Adventures Underwater

I strap on my snorkel gear and plunge into the warm vast turquoise sea. When I am submerged into the water, I see a world of vividness and vibrancy surrounding. Fish and creatures of all designs and colors effortlessly glide around me. I'm in awe of the breathtaking sights, and don't want to leave the tranquility abounding.

Summer Solstice

This scorching, prolonged day in the year is special and

full of pleasure and fun. The sun is shining bright in the sky and kids sprint across vast, vibrant fields. We ponder and glimpse at the solar system and the movement of the sun. With more sunlight hours, we can enjoy picnics, time with family, and the beauty nature yields.

Visit Cousins, Friends, and Family

Our suitcases are stuffed with loads of clothes and items for the flight. On our arrival, grandparents, cousins, and other relatives say we've been apart for too long. Our plan is for endless play and conversations enduring into the night. After weeks of shopping, dinners, and parties, we sing a memorable family song.

4th of July

Fireworks burst and sparklers crackle, while laughter fills the air jubilantly. Grilled shrimp, roasted chicken, and smoky barbecue generate an aromatic scent. We reflect on our fight for freedom as our country's colors are displayed exuberantly. We repose outdoors during the mellow evening, to relish time with family and feel content.

Nature Trails

My backyard is a stone throw from the trails which hold adventures and wildlife. The winds blow a cool breeze through massive trees, while squirrels are collecting acorns to bury. Turtles, frogs, cranes, and ducks scuttle across dirt paths and streams full of life. The trails are quiet and enjoyable; it's peaceful and there's no need to worry.

Labor Day

Massive celebrations range from back to school sales to end of summer parades. We commemorate the people who serve everyone with their career. The last exciting trip of the summer is cherished before we focus on studies and grades. We relish the last sunny days of summer before we start a fresh school year.

BY Tanvi Padala

I WRITE because words are the sound of my thoughts and let me be creative. Through writing, I can escape to impossible worlds, experience magic, and create imaginative characters. Writing brings a tremendous amount of joy and relaxes me.

BOOK TALK

Walking through a forest, you recognize the obvious: the intermittent chirping of red-bellied cardinals, the rustling of leaves, the soft humming of the bumblebee. If you are especially inclined, you might stay in one spot for more than a few moments, but eventually move on. Rarely, especially in our ever-changing world, do we stay in one place to consider the simple magic of life. Rarely do we notice the marriage of lichen to the bare surface of rocks, the fusion and union of two biologically separate entities, the incredible interactions between organisms that we take for granted.

In *The Forest Unseen*, David George Haskell searches for the universal in the infinitesimally small, relating the lessons of nature to human struggles.

As such, Haskell chooses to scope his quest to a mandala, Sanskrit for “circle” and/or “community”, that encompasses no more than a square meter, observing the biology in the mandala as frequently as possible.

The Forest Unseen is a biologist's response to the question on whether the entirety of a Tennessee forest can be seen through the lens of a small contemplative window of leaves, rocks, and water. In discovering the hidden stories of the forest, from smaller windows into nature, Haskell derives more complete, more precise, more beautiful stories.

Eloquently written, the novel explores the often overlooked elements of nature: the bite of the mosquito, the frosting of the snowflake, the ray of sunshine.

In particular, my favorite chapter reconsiders the common annoyance of a mosquito bite. Normally, the human opinion on mosquitoes is limited to this: A mosquito bites into your flesh; you attempt to swat it; it flies away; end of story. Nature is hardly ever

that simplistic. Though only milligrams to us, our blood is instrumental in reproduction of mosquitoes (that's why only female mosquitoes drink blood). After finishing her meal, a vast majority of our extracted blood cells will be digested into proteins, which will then be used to produce the yolk of mosquito eggs. The molecules that make up our blood, that make up humans — hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen and oxygen — will be redistributed into new life. So next time a mosquito bites you, remember that you now are the unintentional parent of several thousand flies.

With beautiful symbolism, Haskell shows the interconnectivity of life, how the minutest of aspects can have out-sized impacts on the overall ecosystem.

More than just a biology textbook, the novel also provides insightful commentary on human impacts on the environment. For example, when confronted with a golf ball which has newly landed in the mandala, Haskell's visceral reaction is anger for those who hit the golf ball and to remove this ugly and standoffish human product. However, Haskell challenges this initial and often common self-hatred of humanity. Indeed, Haskell says, “to love nature and to hate humanity is illogical. Humanity is part of the whole.”

Instead of providing the comfortable one-and-done solutions, Haskell targets the origin of our relations with the environment and asks us to re-interrogate our traditional boundaries with the environment.

The perfect read for the summer, I give *The Forest Unseen* four and a half stars out of five and recommend it for ages 14 and above.

BY David Liu

I WRITE to help others escape to worlds full of color with characters of energy and nuance. To create a place where someone can find refuge, if only just for a few seconds, is something I love to do.



MORE BOOK TALK



One of the most difficult things for many second-generation US and Canadian immigrants is bridging east and west.

One example is with Chinese-American youth, assigned a “western” name while they are also encouraged to observe traditions like Lunar New Year and fluently speak Mandarin/Cantonese.

Another example is that many South Asian-American and Hispanic-American students are bullied due to differences in culture, whether that’s looking different, bringing ethnic food for lunch, or conversely for being too “white-washed” — having assimilated “too much” into American culture.

Rarely in literature do readers find depictions of young people of color learning about their heritage in a productive, engaging manner. Thankfully, we’re seeing those books pop up more frequently in 2022. One such book is *In My Hands*, a young adult contemporary fantasy and adventure novel from debut author Sathya Achia.

Brilliantly and evocatively written, *In My Hands* is a thrilling, vibrant portrait of self-discovery.

The novel follows Chandra, a sixteen-year-old girl from Northern Virginia whose mother immigrated to the US from her village in southern India and now runs an ayurveda store and yoga/dance studio. She has these terrifically painful and otherworldly visions of demonic spirits called selavu. It’s a gift she inherited from her dad, who died years ago. When her mother unexpectedly and rather mysteriously dies, Chandra heads for the jungles of Coorg, India, to learn more about her tribe (which she is told doesn’t exist), to

find the mythical weapon of a goddess, and to face the demon intent on destroying her.

Words fail to describe the transportive quality of Achia’s writing. She manages to illuminate all sorts of scenes — from a family discussion over a dinner of idli-dosa to an intense fight in the middle of a village festival — with skill and ease. This book is certainly one of the most page-turn-able reads of the year!

Additionally, the depth with which each of the characters is written is remarkable. Of course, Chandra is the most multilayered character, but even the most minor characters serve more than just one purpose. Tarun, a “foreign-returned” village boy, is one of my favorites — I could see many personalities of people I know in each of Achia’s characters. I love the way each character evolves throughout the book.

In My Hands promotes courage, believing in yourself, and discovery. The book is also all about cultural literacy and seeing Chandra’s journey will hopefully encourage readers to discover more about their respective heritages... though, unfortunately, a scuffle with a demoness along the way may be a bit out of reach.

I give *In My Hands* 5 stars out of 5 and recommend it for ages 12 and up.

BY Eshaan Mani

I WRITE for the rush of adrenaline I feel when my pen touches the paper. It is that exhilarating experience and the opportunity to not only get my voice out to the public but also be able to be the voice of inspiring people and organizations that inspires me to write.

Dive Into Summer Reading!

With summer in full swing, now is the perfect time to grab a book and lay out in the sun. The break from school provides a great opportunity to expand your literary taste; in this list, check out books ranging from attention-grabbing adventures to intriguing memoirs. You’ll be sure to find your next favorite on this list!

***The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky**

The Perks of Being a Wallflower is the perfect young adult starter book. Following the story of a young boy named Charlie, this story captures the poignant and beautiful moments of adolescence. With his newfound friends, Charlie not only learns what it means to be young through new experiences but also learns more about himself from past memories.

***The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton**

A classic well-loved for its eccentric yet remarkable characters, *The Outsiders* follows a young boy named Ponyboy, as he explores a world where he feels uninvited. This coming-of-age story is well balanced between teenage adventures and societal commentary and is right in between something playful yet serious.

***Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi**

This graphic novel follows the real-life story of the author. During the Islamic Revolution, Marji’s home country of Iran falls under attack and political turmoil. The young protagonist is forced to flee to various places all around the world. Through this, Marji is forced to grow up earlier than most and face the real world. *Persepolis* is an honest, raw reflection that tells a personal story filled with many lessons along the way.

***The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams**

If you’re a lover of fantasy or science fiction, this is for you! *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* is a renowned classic set in a world where logic and illogic somehow coexist. Right from the beginning, the story starts off with the end of the world and an adventure off

to the galaxy, where one human, Arthur, must navigate a peculiar, fascinating world of aliens.

***Dear Evan Hansen* by Val Emmich**

Dear Evan Hansen is a book inspired by the namesake hit Broadway musical. High school student Evan’s letter accidentally gets shared after a classmate’s death, in which Evan is thrust into a fabricated story. From there, Evan is faced with a difficult choice: to live something that never occurred or go along with what everyone believes to be true.

***The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros**

The House on Mango Street follows a young girl named Esperanza as she navigates attending school, growing into her unique home and neighborhood, making friends, and forming relationships. With poetic narration and vibrant scenes, this realistic fiction tells a story of maturing through life experiences.

***The Harry Potter Series* by J.K. Rowling**

The magical wizarding world of *Harry Potter* is truly a masterpiece. When young Harry discovers that he is no ordinary teen but a wizard and that he is destined to fight the evil force named Voldemort, Harry is off on a page-turning adventure along with his closest friends. The *Harry Potter* Series is comprised of seven novels; the length may be daunting, but is incredibly immersive!

***The Summer I Turned Pretty* by Jenny Han**

A trending Amazon Prime show, *The Summer I Turned Pretty* is the beginning novel of a trilogy. A story centered on teen girl Belly and her relationships with close family friends, Belly spends a memorable summer with her best friends while learning the importance of family and friends. This is the perfect book to get you set in the lighthearted summer mood!

BY Kate-Yeonjae Jeong

I WRITE because I have a passion for being able to share my reflections and thoughts with others. I write so I can share the spark of joy that writing gives with many other interested students.



iWRITER Issue 9 Team



Eshaan Mani, Kate-Yeonjae Jeong, Sanjna Pandit, Shaivi Moparathi



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Tanvi Padala, Sanvi Pandit

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