

# iWRITER

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By Kids, For Kids Magazine



# Blast from the Past!



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# Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

If you want to experience (or rediscover) a reality that existed far before your time, I heartily invite you to delve into this issue of The iWRITER Magazine, which is all about celebrating the past. Whether going back a few decades or tracing time to humankind's dawn, this 14th issue of The iWRITER offers numerous opportunities to enjoy a nostalgic journey. Some of our young writers have taken the poetic approach, offering insightful, warm, and even humorous perspectives; others have taken the time to honor historical figures who challenged norms and broke boundaries. Within the variety of writing styles, let's see if you can find a thread that connects the stories together. Is it gratitude? Is it inspiration? Reflection? Perhaps a little bit of them all.

The iWRITER team chose this "blast from the past" theme as a reminder that, sometimes, in order to move into a promising future, one must take a moment to observe the past. What revolutionary ideas came about, and what mistakes were made? The answers to these questions can help steer us all in the right direction. Indeed, time is precious, the past offering us a lens filled with opportunities to grow from and learn, as you will see throughout this issue.

With that, I sincerely hope you enjoy reading the 14th issue of The iWRITER Magazine. May each word or phrase take you to realms and possibilities of "before," thus empowering you to tackle your "now" and "after!"

Sincerest regards,

*Sanjna Pandit*

Deputy Editor and Art Director

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



## contents

### 4 BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO EVERLASTING TREASURES

Embrace the past through journaling, scrapbooks and videos.

### 5 BRIAN SEBASTIAN: A PODCAST PIONEER AND ENTERTAINMENT ICON

Meet Brian Sebastian: A multi-talented entertainment host.

### 6 A PLACE FOR POETRY

Featured poems from the iWRITER staff

### 10 BOOK TALK

Book review of Toshikazu Kawaguchi's *Before the Coffee Gets Cold*.

### 11 MOVIE AND MUSIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Experience the 80s Movies, Music and Nostalgia!





# Beginner's Guide to Everlasting Treasures

Close your eyes and let your mind wander back to the days of elementary school. Remember the feeling of those worn-out sneakers that carried you through countless adventures, and the laughter that echoed in the hallways as friends become family. It feels like just yesterday, yet here I am, a high school freshman, realizing that time moves as swiftly as a hummingbird's wing. Here are 3 ways you can preserve memories, so that you can cherish them no matter what time it is.

## Journaling

The easiest way to connect with your past, but as simple as it may seem, the true initiative for journaling has to come from within. In the midst of school, sports, and so much more, find a few minutes every day to sit down and write. Create a safe space where you are able to take your favorite notebook, and jot down any thoughts you have. Reach to the farthest part of your mind to recollect even the smallest of details: What happened that day, what made you laugh, and what made you annoyed. In a few years, you will be able to look back at this notebook and think, "Wow, is that really what I did in 2023?"

However, there are still many challenges to maintaining a successful podcast. Keeping up with all of the new trends is definitely a challenge. Because Sebastian always has many people booked to be on the podcast months in advance, it is sometimes difficult to fit new interviewees in at the last minute. But he tries to "go with the flow" as obstacles come up in his journey.

## Scrapbooking

While it might not seem the most "convenient" in the moment, take photos. Your mind is filled with so many other things that unless you have a photographic memory, it might be hard to remember the precious moments. Compile a descriptive scrapbook of your friends, adventures, and the things in life that make you happy.

You will keep growing, surrounding yourself with new people, but you will one day want to look back at what you did in high school. Pour all of your creative energy into this book, because it will reward you in the future. Looking back at this scrapbook will ignite old memories and bring you to the past.

## Videos

Don't worry about your iCloud storage getting backed up by recording videos; you will be able to preserve your memories in a unique way. By documenting a day out with friends, or a late night study session, you will be able to vicariously live through your younger days through your videos. What better way to hold onto the past, then to create your very own time machine. I love to watch hilarious videos of myself in kindergarten, dancing and singing, what was I thinking? You can even record TikTok trends/ Instagram Reels with your friends to be able to recreate them in the future. Whether they are vintage home videos or your embarrassing TikTok drafts, videos are the best way to grow sentimental, watching yourself be carefree.

So, as we navigate the fast-paced journey of life, how can we ensure these moments, these snippets of our existence, don't slip through our fingers like grains of sand? As one anonymous sage beautifully put it, "The best thing about memories is making them."

With each journal entry, every scrapbook page, and all the heartfelt videos we create, we're not just preserving the past; we're crafting the stories of our lives. Let's treasure every moment, for they are the building blocks of our future, and let's make each one count. As Gad Saad said, "**Life is short and every moment is precious.**"

## BY Nia Shetty

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



# Brian Sebastian

## A Podcast Pioneer and Entertainment Icon

Meet Brian Sebastian: a Producer, Radio, Television, and Podcast host of *Movie Reviews and More* with 20 million views and counting across multiple platforms. But his story is not just about fame and celebrity interviews. It's about passion, perseverance, and following your dreams.

From a young age, Sebastian had an interest in the world of radio and television. "I always knew that I wanted to do interviews. It's one of those things that I just figured out from a young age." Sebastian shared that his high school band director helped shape his career, "He gave me free rein to explore what I want to do." Sebastian added that these experiences gave him confidence in his creativity.

Fast forward a few years, Sebastian moved to California in 1987. Taking the big step from his hometown in Connecticut to the bustling city of Los Angeles was not easy for him.

"But I knew that I needed to move to California because it would be an opportunity for me to grow my career." Sebastian started off making demo tapes at night, and he eventually got his first radio job at Power 106 radio station in Los Angeles. This opportunity was very enriching for Sebastian and helped pave the way for future endeavors in his career.

He later started *Movie Reviews and More* with the goal of sharing quality entertainment with his viewers. According to his website, the primary focus of the podcast is to "connect with the culture of his diverse audience by bringing a balanced mix of information and entertainment to his current and growing new audiences alike.

Sebastian believes that the success of *Movie Reviews and More* is due to their consistency. "We never miss a week, not even on holidays. I think that's what sets us apart from everyone else."

He also works to keep his content fresh, having two to three interviewees per week,

However, there are still many challenges to maintaining a successful podcast. Keeping up with all of the new trends is definitely a challenge. Because Sebastian always has many people booked to be on the podcast months in advance, it is sometimes difficult to fit new interviewees in at the last minute.

But he tries to "go with the flow" as obstacles come up in his journey.

As for the future of the entertainment industry, he believes that Artificial Intelligence will play a big role. "It's going to affect every aspect of the industry, from voiceovers to videogames."

Sebastian is also the Co-Founder of DreamWeaver, an organization that is dedicated to the excellence of young and upcoming artists by giving them the tools for success. The goal of DreamWeaver is to "weave the impossible into reality."

Sebastian is "trying to create something that's never been done before" and hopes to help create a positive change in the community through this initiative.

Brian Sebastian is an inspirational person in the realm of entertainment. Sebastian's successful career is a testament to his hard work and dedication to his craft.

To learn more about Brian Sebastian, *Movie Reviews and More*, and DreamWeaver, visit <https://dreamweaverarts.org/about/>

## 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*





# A Place for Poetry

## Featured Poems From the iWRITER Staff

### LIVING THE DREAM: IT TAKES A TEAM

Humans create positive changes through time. Every step that brings about a positive change requires sacrifices and struggles from dedicated and passionate individuals.

These changes to the status quo of society required a “team” of inspiring people who have or are contributing greatly to this change. It shows the world the power of one person to make a positive difference. Though these people may have contributed as a team during different time frames, their contributions were beautifully woven together as they created a combined dream of justice for all people.

#### D - Fredrick (Douglas)

Frederick became a statesman and orator  
 His journey to freedom made him a great curator  
 He overcame extreme obstacles but abolished slavery  
 Like him, be the light by showing hope and bravery

#### R - Rose Marie McCoy

Rose was a great singer of her time  
 She accomplished so much in her lifetime  
 To us, she was an amazing role model  
 She inspired us not to be afraid to show who we are

#### E - Ella Fitzgerald

Ella was a special singer; towards her, nobody ever acted aweless  
 Her tone, phrasing, and intonation were flawless  
 Ella shows us it's okay to be different and unique  
 Be proud of what you do, and never act weak

#### A - Alice Coachman

Alice was excellent at the high jump; she worked hard to achieve her dream  
 By earning an Olympic gold medal, she contributed to society and the “team”  
 If you're hopeful about your goals, you can achieve them  
 It is from hard work that achievements can stem

#### M - Mary White Ovington

She noticed many people in society were not treated well  
 By listening to famous activists, she aspired to eradicate these issues and come out of her shell  
 During her time, she encouraged compassion for all  
 Let's spread kindness and help each other when we fall

#### T - Toni Morrison

During the 1900s, she was a bestselling novelist  
 By winning a Pulitzer and Nobel, she made society cognizant

Large obstacles were in her path, yet she strove to inspire and create massive expectations,  
 Her path as a writer helps us reflect on and create our legacy's foundation,

#### E - Ethel Waters

Ethel's contributions were her style in acting, jazz, and dance  
 She showed that all people had a chance  
 Don't hesitate to shine in acting, music, and dancing if it's your best  
 It may let you really articulate, lead, and express

#### A - Annie Lee Wilkerson Cooper

Annie Lee existed when no one knew if the dream would survive  
 The risks were high, and the movements were a focus of their lives  
 To ensure the change was possible, she acted as an avid activist in Selma  
 With her dedication and motivation, she helped many people overcome their dilemmas

#### M - Maya Angelou

Maya was a fantastic poet and memoirist,  
 She uplifts society with motivation— a well-known activist  
 Maya created powerful inspiration that abounds to this day  
 Writing and memoirs may be your thing and will help you find a way

#### 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.*



THE BIRTH OF A STAR

At the dawn of time,  
stars held still in mere  
pinpricks of life, sparks so  
brittle they were swallowed  
by the dark around them.

Brittle pools of light but still  
they grow, they steal  
the light of the world and hoard it  
jealously, blinding white light sweetens  
to orange then to mottled crimson.

Now sparks are busting free  
from their flaming surfaces  
to the agony of their mother,  
and space is swollen so stiff

it can scarcely breathe, but  
it dares not complain, knowing  
the agony of a million years  
of birth will soon be worth it.

The mother places a hand  
to her starry womb, and feels  
the balance of life and time  
shift inside her as the stars

fly about in a frenzy, they  
have taken all the color of the

world but it is still not enough,  
because they are too hungry,  
world but it is still not enough,  
because they are too hungry,

they need more than their  
mother's shallow  
embrace could provide.

Stars burst free from space  
in an explosion of color,  
streaks of blue spiral

into whites and reds and  
oranges, mixing with the oily  
silence of space to create life itself,

and the mother collapses, spent  
but delighted. She caresses each star

with a glowing smile, and they rush  
to her, feeling instinctively for her warmth,  
her love, and time has begun at last.

**BY Helen Zhang**

*I WRITE because, in a world where so much is uncertain, my imagination is always reliably creative and available. I know that, in times of stress, poetry and literature are always ways to find release and consistency in my life.*

**BY Sanjna Pandit**

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



I SHALL COMPARE THEE TO THE 80'S

Oh, how I wish to be in the 80s  
When rock bands and pop stars ruled the nation

The poofy- haired and goofy- dressed ladies  
Who lived up to their bold reputation

Just sit in style in my DeLorean  
We'll stop at Cheers and grab a drink from Sam

And catch some ghosts with my buddy Venkman  
We'll dance the jitterbug along with Wham

We'll have the answer when asked, "Where's the Beef?"  
And battle on the field of love with Pat

Then sip Capri Sun, oh what a relief!  
Then rest on the golden couch where Blanche sat

A decade of soul, workouts, and laughter  
Those memories are what I'm always after.

I KNEW YOU BEFORE I WAS BORN - AFTER LI YOUNG LEE

i knew you before i was born.

i felt your warm palm  
against my chest,  
searching for a hum, a pulse,  
something more.

under a sky full of obsidian and fog  
you held me, gently  
placed me on a bed of  
uprooted weeds and  
dirt and pieces of  
a broken kaleidoscope.

you called me  
in the middle of winter,  
silently nestled in the womb.

you are a ghost dressed in scarlett  
and building fairy houses with  
torn limbs and pebbles.  
you are a million flickering  
stars i cannot see.

sometimes i want to lie  
with you buried fifteen feet  
beneath the snow.

you are cold and unmoving  
and sometimes you are whispering  
and other times you are  
dead.

my lips are yours but painted  
blue and twitching.

do you like to play chess  
with switchblades and flesh?

clasp your hands in prayer on  
marbled jade and sandalwood beads  
your grandfather gifts you  
nine years later, learn to read  
my mind.

**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.*

CHILDHOOD

Small hands grip my Dora lunch box,  
Purple backpack  
Bouncing as my feet bring me to the playground

Girls in skirts  
Waiting by the field blasting  
Music, laughing with friends  
Eyelashes long and accented  
Tote bags adorning their shoulders

Suddenly my Dora lunch box is inconsequential,  
Kiddish,  
Bright purple backpack now dull  
Velcro shoes dragging on concrete.

My reflection stares back at me,  
Eyes dull, complete with bags  
Again, mascara is pulled out and applied,  
as if making up for 4 hours of sleep the night before

Worn tote bag,  
Same routine, in goes iPad and computer  
I miss the days spent when I still used a pencil,  
Days when sleep wasn't a worry  
Walking to the field, I see kids wadling along,  
Backpacks a comical size,

Eyes full of wonder, not sleep  
And I wish I was back there

Back in a time  
I didn't appreciate but now yearn so deeply.

We want what we don't have,  
So instead  
Live in the moment.

**BY Prisha Shivani**

*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. publish, sharing my pieces with many people.*





# Before the Coffee Gets Cold

by Toshikazu Kawaguchi

**B**efore the Coffee Gets Cold, by Toshikazu Kawaguchi, is a short novel that manages to provide insight into four different types of relationships all in the setting of a cozy café. Through four different stories, the relationships between workers and visitors of the Funiculi Funicula, from familial to romantic to platonic, are explored.

What makes Kawaguchi's novel special is the world building. He intricately establishes the rules of the café in the first story of the book: traveling back in time is now possible but with a catch: nothing changes in the present, and time travel is only possible when sitting in one specific chair before the visitor's, or employee's, coffee runs cold.

Initially, the reader is entranced by the cozy yet mysterious café, but the characters of the book are not immediately distinguishable. Due to the fact that there are many different characters that the reader is introduced to only within the first story, it can be initially disorienting and in some ways makes the book challenging to follow.

The first story, "Lovers" focuses on the the most intriguing relationship between Fumiko and Goro. "Lovers" analyzes the careful and oftentimes confusing balance between what matters most: career or romantic relationships. The story endearingly guides readers through both Fumiko's insecurities in her relationship with Goro, while also reminding the reader what is at the center of Before the Coffee Gets Cold: how do we interact with the people we love, and what would we do for them even if it meant nothing would change?

"The Husband and the Wife" vignette continues the commentary on romantic relationships, specifically regarding the idea of commitment—a concept that "Lovers" began, but now takes it from a different perspective. Kawaguchi offers his characters to ask the question: Would you still love someone even if they couldn't love you back?

The final two stories of Before the Coffee Gets Cold asks questions about the extent of love but instead on the basis of familial love. "The Sisters" instead does not focus on what one would give up for their love, but how people can regret the time they spent with the ones they love. In "The Sisters," Hirai discovers that her sister, Kumi, who visited her over the past few years attempting to make her come home has died. Hirai decides to go back in time to ask for forgiveness from her sister and realizes how much love she had rejected from her sister in the years prior to her death. Kawaguchi utilizes the tender relationship that is sisterhood to put the lesson blank in the reader's face:

Do you really give your family's love the time that it deserves? Finally, "Mother and Child" follows Kei who has just discovered she is pregnant, but will likely not survive after childbirth. She uses this knowledge to travel into the future to meet her daughter. After talking and connecting with her daughter, Kei knows that the sacrifice is worth it in order for her daughter to survive, even if it means she will never be able to live that future she traveled to with her daughter. "Mother and Child" once again puts Kawaguchi's ability to carefully illustrate relationships on full display, reminding the reader of all that humans sacrifice for the ones they love. Though Before the Coffee Gets Cold is a whimsical and sometimes odd tale of a quirky café, it carefully and delicately tells the wider story of how humans love and lose.



**BY Cami Culbertson**

*I WRITE because it makes me feel powerful. Normally in my everyday life, I feel small or insignificant in the grand scheme of things. When I write and have the ability to publish, I feel like I am making my mark. Even if what I am writing about seems small, the fact I can share my voice in works like magazines where I am alongside talented writers, makes all the work I do feel significant to me. I enjoy keeping what I write, no matter how old, so I can reflect back on the work I have done and feel confident. Writing is the articulation of everything I cannot express otherwise.*

# Movie and Music Recommendations!

The 80s were one of the best decades we ever knew. It was a time of new technology, new culture, and, of course, the best movies and music!

When I was younger, I was exposed to 80s music, movies, and more, so I'm very grateful to share them with you! Here's a list of some classic films and music for you to try out!

## Movies

*Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986) is about a teenage boy who decides to skip school and have a fun day in the city. He convinces his best friends to join him in his Chicago-based adventures. (For ages 13 and up)

*Ghostbusters* (1984) is an action-packed movie involving three scientists who fight off ghosts. The trio of ghostbusters must save New York from supernatural spirits! (For ages 10 and up)

*The Princess Bride* (1987) is the story of a young farmer named Westley who must rescue his true love, Princess Buttercup, from the loathsome Prince Humperdinck. This movie is the perfect romantic comedy for you to watch! (For all ages)

*Indiana Jones: Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) is the first movie in the series of Indiana Jones. Indiana Jones, the archaeologist, must track down an ancient artifact before the Nazis use it for world domination. (For all ages)

*The Goonies* (1985) is about a group of young kids who find an old map to underground treasure. Along their exploration, they investigate a mystery as well as face dangerous risks. (For all ages)

*Back To the Future* (1985) Marty McFly is sent back in time to the 50s when his friend Doc Brown creates a time machine. Marty must make sure his parents fall in love again, otherwise, he and his family will all disappear! (For ages 13 and up)

*The Karate Kid* (1984) When Daniel moves to California, he becomes the target of a group of bullies who learn karate from the Cobra Kai dojo. But, Daniel meets a kind repairman named Mr. Miyagi, who is a martial arts master himself. Daniel convinces Mr. Miyagi to teach him karate so that Daniel can defeat his bullies. (For all ages)

**BY Sanvi Pandit**

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Here are some well-known music artists from the 80s, along with some of their popular hits:

*Michael Jackson: "Smooth Criminal" and "Human Nature"*

*The Cars: "My Best Friend's Girl" and "Since You're Gone"*

*AC/DC: "You Shook Me All Night Long" and "Thunderstruck"*

*Blondie: "The Tide Is High" and "One Way Or Another"*

*Queen: "Bohemian Rhapsody" and "Radio Ga Ga"*

*Duran Duran: "Friends of Mine" and "All She Wants Is"*

*Madonna: "Material Girl" and "Borderline"*

I hope you enjoy these totally tubular recommendations!





# iWRITER Issue 14 Team



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