



**3D**  
**MONDAY**  
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 Work on this page also appears on the  
 St. Petersburg Times Web site,  
 www.sptimes.com.

**P**encil. Crayon. Pen. Watercolor. This month and next, the spotlight falls on middle school artists who found their muse in many different media. But there are words, too. Our writers are thankful "for the colors and diversity of the world" and for the part a beloved grandfather played in one student's life. They ponder peace and sadness, life and death.

Want to see your own creative works on these pages in a future edition? Please see the instructions for submissions and future theme topics on **Page 4D**. Please read these carefully each week, because the rules sometimes change — and the themes most certainly do!

— NANCY GREEN, Xpressions editor

# MIDDLE SCHOOL MARVELS

Years have been spent rising to the top  
 Changing from green to orange then  
 back to black  
 The loftiness could be felt when waltzing  
 to the floor  
 In the beginning, it was brand-new lore.  
 An inch of aged life carpets the land  
 While germination plays a steady band.  
 It all pulls together the following spring,  
 When the premature branches com-  
 mence to sing.

By HAYLEY GERMACK, 14, eighth grade,  
 Bay Point Middle School, St. Petersburg

## Guess Which Hand?

My grandpa is 84 years old. I remember visiting him in Pennsylvania when I was very little, and he always played a game with me called "Guess Which Hand?"

He would hold out his two hands and one hand would have a silver dollar in it and the other hand would be empty. I would get a prize if I guessed which hand was holding the dollar and I would get the prize even if I guessed wrong and the hand was empty. I somehow knew that he always wanted to give me the prize.

My grandpa not only wanted to give me prizes; he also wanted to give me special memories. One night during a visit to my grandpa's house snow had been forecast. My grandpa knew that I had never seen snow, and he couldn't sleep because he was so excited about showing me snow.

His house was old with wooden floorboards, and all night long I heard my grandpa walking down the long, creaky hall from his bedroom to the front door. He would stand at the front door and flick on the front door light to see if there were white flakes falling into the pool of yellow light. He would slowly walk back to his room and his footsteps would go creak, creak, creak down that long wooden hall.

Finally, at around 4 o'clock in the morning, it started to snow and my grandpa came to my room and made me get out of bed to see it. I went outside with him, and we stood by the porch light looking up into the black sky, where thousands of white flakes were falling in the blackness. I will never forget that he wanted me to see that.

In the last few years, Grandpa sometimes forgets things about me and occasionally he looks at me and I don't think he really knows who I am. It used to make me feel strange that I knew him so well and he didn't know me.

The really weird thing is that Grandpa always remembers my dogs and smiles at them and gives them dog biscuits and hugs, but he doesn't really seem to see me. I know he has dementia, but it still bothers me. But my grandpa has always had a special connection with animals, and I think that other parts of his mind are missing, but his link with animals is still there.

We still play the "Guess Which Hand?" game. The hard part is that Grandpa forgets to hide something in one of his hands. I will guess that his right hand or his left hand is holding the silver dollar and neither hand has a prize. Grandpa holds open both his hands, and they are empty. I used to feel angry at him for forgetting the game, but I know he can't help it and his mind has a sickness that has made him "go away."

Now when I visit my favorite older person I know that he may not remember me and he may not remember how to play our favorite game. But I feel okay about Grandpa because I have kept the memory of standing with him inside the circle of light from his front porch and looking up into the black sky while the snow was falling. He gave me my first snow and it was magic.

By PAUL SMIETANA, 12, sixth grade,  
 Seminole Middle School

## Poetry from seventh-graders at Orange Grove Middle School Magnet for the Arts in Tampa:

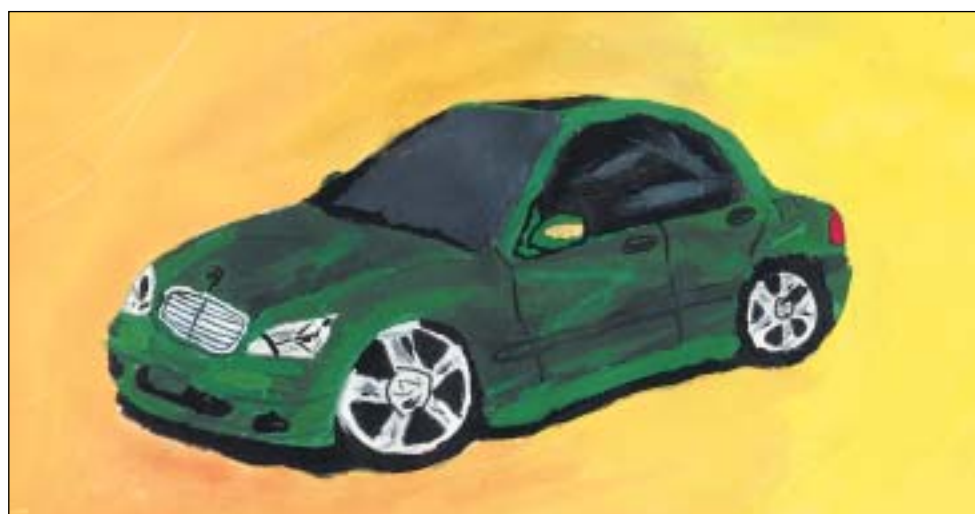
### The Dancer

A girl next door,  
 a dancer.  
 Died of a disease called cancer.  
 In bed  
 Wishing she was still alive.  
 About to close my eyes,  
 music/ballet music.  
 To my window,  
 noise gets softer.  
 I look out,  
 it stops.  
 Nothing,  
 music starts again.  
 Something in the shadows.  
 There she was, dancing in the street.

By LAURA HECKLEY, 13



By QUANIESHA GRIFFIN, 14, eighth grade, Riviera Middle School, St. Petersburg



By BRANDON HUNT, 13, eighth grade, Riviera Middle School, St. Petersburg



**ABOVE AND AT LEFT:** Two paintings by DANIJELA GANIC, 13, eighth grade, Riviera Middle School, St. Petersburg



By JULIA ELISE JOHNSON, 11, sixth grade, D.S. Parrott Middle School, Brooksville

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 XPRESSIONS  
 ON 4D**