

# The Blue Guitar Jr.

*Featuring  
literature  
and art  
for youth*

*The 2019 edition*



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[www.theblueguitarmagazine.org](http://www.theblueguitarmagazine.org) and [www.artizona.org](http://www.artizona.org).

“Things as they are are changed upon the blue guitar.”  
— Excerpt from Wallace Stevens’ 1937 poem “The Man With the Blue Guitar.”  
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# My Missing Socks

## By Akshaj Neil Atluri

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**M**y parents never let me do the laundry. They are always worried that I will forget that the washer is going and accidentally flood the house. I don't agree because I know that I would be careful and pay attention to what I was doing. One day, however, my parents were too busy with work, so they asked me to do the laundry. I was excited but nervous because I wanted to make sure that I did it right. Everything started out fine. I collected all the dirty laundry from my siblings' rooms and the bathrooms and brought everything to the laundry room. I sorted everything into several piles: towels, clothes, and bed linens. I washed and dried the towels and bed linens first. Last I washed the clothes. After everything was washed and dried, I realized that my favorite pair of socks were missing!

Sunglass-wearing pineapples lounging on the softest royal blue knit you had ever felt; these socks had seen me through the toughest days of second grade. They had made me feel better when another student had picked on me. They had warmed my feet when it was cold out. I knew I had to find my socks.

I panicked as I shook out all the clean

clothes searching for them. Black socks, green socks, red socks. I found every color of socks except my special royal blue socks. I searched my room, my bathroom, and even my siblings' rooms. I couldn't find them anywhere!

I ran through the house, down the stairs, and into the den yelling for my father. "Dad!" I yelled. "My pineapple socks are gone! The laundry gremlins stole them!"

My dad looked up from the paper he was reading. "Are you sure the laundry gremlins stole them?" he asked.

"Yes, I know that they stole them," I insisted, jumping up and down, scared that I had lost my favorite socks forever. How was I supposed to get through the rest of second grade without them?

"Why don't you try looking in the washer and dryer again to make sure that you didn't leave them in there," my dad suggested.

"I'll go check," I said. Running back upstairs to the laundry room, I opened the washer and dryer to check for my socks, but they weren't there. Worried, I ran back downstairs and back to the den. I really needed to find my socks.

"They weren't in the washer or dryer,"



Akshaj Neil Atluri is in second grade. He likes to build with Legos and play soccer. He also enjoys maps and learning about geography. When he grows up, he wants to be a doctor. Neil has also been published in Scribbler Literary and Arts Magazine.

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I said.

“Have you tried looking inside your shoes?” my dad asked.

I always take my socks out of my shoes, but I ran into the mudroom and looked in my shoes which were on the shoe rack. No socks.

This time when I went to ask my dad, he suggested I check the dirty socks bucket in the laundry room.

“I washed all the socks,” I said.

“Are you sure you remembered the socks in the dirty sock bucket?”

I thought back but couldn’t remember if I had washed the socks in the socks bucket. “Okay,” I said. “I think I washed those socks, too, but I will go check.”

I was tired from running all over the house, but I still raced up the stairs, determined to find my socks. Going back into the laundry room, I found the dirty socks bucket still filled with really dirty socks. I

dumped out the socks and started throwing them over my shoulders. At the bottom of the pile, I found my favorite pineapple socks, hidden under my other dirty socks.

Holding my socks, I ran down the stairs yelling, “Pineapple Joe is back!”

“Great job finding your socks by yourself,” my dad said. “Are they clean?”

I sniffed the socks and coughed. “No,” I choked. “Definitely not clean. I think I will go back upstairs and finish the laundry now.”

As I ran back upstairs, I could hear my dad laugh, but I didn’t know what he had found so funny and figured it must have been something he was reading. I put all the socks in the washer and then the dryer and then I put all of the socks in the clean socks bucket for Monday.

After I was finished, I was exhausted, but I was also proud of myself. I had done all of the laundry all by myself. Walking downstairs, I told my dad, “I did it! I finished the laundry.”

# Contor

## By Adrish Gande

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Once upon a time, there was a girl named Contor. She lived on Earth, and her mom and dad were king and queen of Corto. She would have liked to have friends, but she couldn't leave the palace since she had special powers to make herself invisible and hypnotize people and make them do what she wanted. Her family was worried that she would accidentally hurt someone with her powers.

Contor hated that she was stuck in the palace and was very angry. After her family died in a terrible accident, she tried to take over as queen. Since no one knew that she existed, they didn't believe that she was queen.

Contor got really, really hurt and really, really mad. She started destroying the country.

Thunder Man, the protector of the Earth and Contor's uncle, heard that Contor was hypnotizing her subjects, so he and his younger sister, Silver Thunder, went to save Corto. They raced to Corto and were very sad at what they saw. All the buildings had been destroyed and the people were hypnotized. When they tried to help the people, they attacked Thunder Man and Silver Thunder.

"Silver Thunder," Thunder Man said, "Please help these poor people get unhypnotized while I go find Contor. We have to stop her before more people get hurt."

"Okay, Thunder Man," she said. "I will find a way to unhypnotize them."

Thunder Man went to the castle to find Contor. He found her in the throne room sitting on the throne that used to belong to her father. She was perched on the throne, a smile on her lips as she looked out the window.

"Contor," Thunder Man said.

"Uncle," she said, looking toward him. "Nice of you to come by."

"You are the princess of Corto? Why are you destroying your own country?" he asked with a frown.

Contor felt anger inside her. He didn't understand how hard it was for her. "No one wanted me to be queen and it was my right! Why shouldn't I destroy them?"

"Rulers don't hurt their citizens; they are supposed to help them."

Contor clenched her hands into fists and jumped to her feet. She threw out a hand and tried to blast Thunder Man with her powers. Thunder Man was quick and was



Adrish Gande is in second grade. His favorite sport is Taekwondo. He likes bicycle riding and going to the park. When he grows up, Adrish wants to become a doctor. His fantasy wish is to be the king of the whole world.

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able to get out of the way.

Their battle was fierce. Every time Contor tried to hurt Thunder Man, he was able to get out of the way. Soon, they were both tired.

Thunder Man blasted lightning at Contor. The lightning hit her and she fell to the ground.

She started crying. She missed her family and she hated that she took out her anger on the people in her kingdom.

Thunder Man looked down at his niece as she lay on the hard ground. He thought about putting her in jail, but watching her cry, he knew that he needed to help her. He sat down next to her and put a hand on the back of her head.

“I know that you are sad and you miss your family, but you can’t hurt the people of your kingdom.”

“I don’t know what to do,” Contor cried.

“I will help you,” Thunder Man said. “If you would like, I will stay and help you rebuild your kingdom and save your citizens as long as you promise not to hurt anyone ever again.”

Contor sat up and wiped her tears away. She thought about it for a moment and decided to accept her uncle’s help.

“Okay, Uncle,” she said. “I promise never to hurt people again.”

Contor was still sad about her family, but she learned that even though she was upset, it was never okay to hurt other people. She also learned that if she needed help, her uncle would always be there for her.

# Aliens

By Aneesh Velicheti

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**O**n a bright serene day, in the arid desert of California, a silver drop appeared in the sky. Most people thought it was an illusion, but when it got closer, some people who were driving from Phoenix to L.A. realized it was a UFO. Everybody got out of their car to see where the UFO would land.

The ship, which looked like a giant silver frisbee, landed in the middle of the rough terrain. Sixteen aliens came out. There was a lot of diversity, but most were tall and green and gilded as they walked. Nobody gave an ovation, but everyone made way for the aliens.

One was holding a megaphone and said in an enigmatic voice, "Hello, mortals, we have come to take you over."

His voice could be heard for hundreds of miles.

Everyone ran to their houses and cars. They all feared for their lives, except for two people, Jake and John.

They both worked for the government as their vocation. Jake was from Louisville, Kentucky, and knew a lot of people there. John was from Little Rock, Arkansas, but he did not know many people from Arkansas because he moved to Phoenix when he was young. They were both interested in politics, so they decided to

work for the government.

They walked to their sleek, black, military cars. They called the White House and told the president about the UFO sighting near the desert in California. Upon instruction from the president's chief of staff, they drove to a base in California. The base was very large and roomy, but also very overcrowded with people trying to do their work. They found Bob, a high-ranking government official. They explained what happened to Bob.

Bob thought the aliens would like gold, so he said, "We should bribe them."

"I'll call Joe, one of my old friends and a government official, in Kentucky and ask him to take a quarter ton of gold from Fort Knox," said Jake.

Jake left the room, and Bob said to John, "If it doesn't work, we can always call that famous car builder who wants to colonize different planets to see if we can escape to Mars!" he joked.

After he learned about the gold, Joe sent the gold to Jake, John, and Bob.

Bob video called the aliens.

The aliens did not know how to operate a video call because the humans had just added them to the internet. On their planet, everything was very high tech, but they still had not developed a way to communicate,



Aneesh is a fifth-grader. His interests are reading, playing tennis, and building Legos. He likes to paint and do artwork in his free time. When Aneesh grows up, he wants to be either an engineer or an entrepreneur.

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other than mail. The aliens fumbled with the video call for a few minutes, then finally pressed the play button. They all huddled together and listened to the humans' message. After that, the aliens made a recording of their own and told the humans that they did not want their gold, for they already had enough gold. They wanted their planet! The aliens immediately hung up.

Jake decided he needed a break to think and take a walk. While walking, he suddenly noticed a silver dome encompassing something. As he got closer, he realized it was the alien base. They had put up a dome to shield them from any attacks. Jake ran back to the base to tell Bob and John that they couldn't use any weapons as the aliens seemed to have far superior technology, and that they needed to think outside the box and come up with a different solution. Bob suggested talking to a scientist at NASA.

Jake explained what happened to a scientist who just had finished lunch break.

The scientist asked to look at the dome through a telescope. Jake told him where it was, and the scientist saw a statue of Athena. They figured out the aliens worshiped the ancient Greek gods, so they figured that if they brought them a statue from Olympia of Zeus, the aliens would be attracted to it, like a magnet. Jake took a private jet to Olympia. When he landed, he immediately went to the nearest sculpture shop and asked to buy a statue of Zeus. He got some food with the pilot and then they took a flight back home, with the statue of Zeus. John ordered a S.W.A.T. team to place the statue on the aliens' ship, so the aliens went to it. The team set a timer, and when the aliens were all on the ship, the ship blasted off.

Earth lived happily ever after.

# Saving the Mystical Spell Caster

By Vrinda Bansal

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**M**ylene pushed the cloth back covering the window of her bedroom to allow a gentle breeze to waft through the room. She sighed as she stared down at the scroll in her hands. She had been studying for hours, and she was no closer to understanding the ancient text than when she started. She knew that her tutor, Han, would be angry with her. Han expected a lot from Mylene, because he wanted Mylene to be well educated.

The text was in hieroglyphs, which Mylene was still struggling to learn. After what felt like hours, she still wasn't able to decipher it and decided to go and ask her mother for help. She got up and left her room.

Torches burned brightly from wall sconces as she walked down the hall and through her family's keep to the main room where her mother was sitting at a long table going through the family's accounts. Rents from the tenants were due soon and her mother had to prepare for the collection. Mylene's father was out on an expedition, and the treasurer was sick and couldn't manage the accounts until he got better.

"I am not able to understand this text.

Can you please help me?" Mylene asked, walking into the room, sweet smelling rushes crunching beneath her feet. She sat down at the table next to her mother.

Her mother set down the quill she was holding and took the scroll from Mylene. She stared at it for several seconds, a slight smile curving her lips. "I used to read this scroll when I was young," she said. "I can help you. The hieroglyphs tell a story about a Mystical Spell Caster."

"Really?" Mylene asked, leaning closer.

"Yes. The legend says the Mystical Spell Caster is destined to save the world and without him the world is in grave danger."

"Grave danger?" Mylene asked, frowning. "That doesn't sound good. Do you believe in this, Mother?"

Her mother shook her head and said, "No, it is just an old myth."

"Oh," Mylene said, disappointed. She liked the idea of the Mystical Spell Caster.

"Go back to your room, and read the rest," said her mom gesturing to the hall. "Your tutor will be here tomorrow and you have to have this finished."

"But I can't figure out all of the symbols," said Mylene with annoyance.



Vrinda Bansal is a sixth-grader. She loves reading, swimming, riding her bicycle, and playing tennis. When she grows up, Vrinda wants to be a physician.

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She didn't like it when she couldn't figure things out.

"Did you use the translator stone your tutor left?" her mother asked.

Mylene looked down at her feet. She had forgotten about the stone. "No, I forgot that I had it."

"Where is it?"

"Um, under my bed, I think."

"It doesn't do you any good under your bed. You might want to get it out."

"I will, as soon as I get back to my room."

"Then I would suggest using the stone to help you translate."

"Okay," Mylene said. She got up from the table and went back to her room. She sat down on the soft woven rug next to her bed. The long flat stone etched with symbols clattered loudly against the stone floor as she pulled it out from under her bed. The stone was heavy, so she set it on the rug next to her. She started studying the rest of the text.

Suddenly, the scroll began to glow.

Mylene closed her eyes, but when she opened them again, the scroll was still glowing. She immediately dropped the scroll and jumped up, and when it landed on the rug it started talking.

She backed away until she was pressed up against the wall, her eyes glued on the scroll. She was sure someone was playing a trick on her, but when it disappeared into thin air, she knew it was no trick.

Her feet propelled her forward to where the scroll had been, and then the scroll appeared behind her. Mylene felt very scared and shocked. She was certain she was imagining things and tried pinching herself, but all of it was very real.

Mylene ran to the other side of the room, trying not

to scream. That was when the scroll sat up straight into the air, folded in on itself until it looked like a mouth, and started speaking.

"You must save the Mystical Spell Caster," the scroll said in a high-pitched voice.

"What?" Mylene's voice was no more than a croak when she spoke.

"The world is in grave danger!" the scroll continued. "You must go to the dragon's lair and save him."

Mylene shook her head. "But my mom said that the Mystical Spell Caster wasn't real."

"He's very real and you have to save him, Mylene!" the scroll shouted in annoyance.

"I don't know what to do." Mylene was still feeling shocked. There was no such thing as magic, and a flying scroll appearing, talking about some mystical spell caster, was definitely not real—or at least that's what she thought. How was she supposed to save some spell caster?

"Let me explain."

Mylene shook her head again. "This isn't real. I know this isn't real. Mother said there is no such thing as a mystical spell caster."

The scroll let out a long sigh and began to explain. "The myth of the Mystical Spell Caster is real. The magical community wanted to keep him safe, so we made up the story that he didn't exist."

"But—"

"Don't interrupt. You need to listen to what I am saying. You must save him no matter what! He lost his power and the dragon took him prisoner! You must save him! If you don't, the dragon will take all of his powers, then the world will be in great danger."

"How?" Mylene asked.

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“Take me with you! I will help you on your journey!”

Mylene thought hard. She wanted to save the magician, but she was scared of the dragon. How would she be able to save the mystical spell caster from a dragon? Even though she was scared, she knew that she had to save the spell caster.

“Okay,” she said. “I’ll do it.”

The scroll rolled itself up and dropped onto the floor.

She knew that this journey would be a long one and remembered reading in the scroll that saving someone so important would be hard. She took a pouch and filled it up with water, in case she needed it. She also took some wool clothing in case she got cold.

When night approached, Mylene took the scroll and left home. She asked the scroll where the lair was.

The scroll said, “Walk through the forest, and continue walking straight.”

She walked through a forest that was covered with dead branches on the ground. The forest was filled with pine trees. She could hear the wolves howling, but fortunately she didn’t encounter any. It was not cold, and when she looked at the stars, she could see many of the constellations. After walking for what seemed like hours, she arrived at the dragon’s lair. She could tell it was the dragon’s lair because of the roaring she could hear inside.

She opened the scroll and asked for a map, but the scroll was blank. She tried tapping on the scroll to see if anything would happen, but it was still blank.

Rolling the scroll up, she went into the cave a little bit and called out for the spell caster. There was no answer. She walked in a little farther, but then realized how huge the cave was and went back out. She did not

want to get lost and definitely did not want to be the dragon’s breakfast. She would have left right then, but she knew that she had to save the spell caster.

Gathering her courage, she went back into the cave. If she didn’t save the Mystical Spell Caster, then the dragon would take all of his powers. Right away, she took a wrong turn and got lost. Mylene was starting to feel scared again. She didn’t like dark places, especially when there was a dragon around. She could hear the roar of the dragon’s fire from a far distance.

Mylene decided to whistle for the spell caster. She whistled, trying to see if she could hear anyone, and then she heard the Mystical Spell Caster call out to her. “HERE! PLEASE SAVE ME!” he yelled.

Mylene worked her way through the lair until she saw him. He was locked in a cell with dirty metal bars. The Mystical Spell Caster was old; he had a white beard and white hair. He wore a black robe.

She carefully tiptoed, so she wouldn’t be heard. She opened the lock with a wire. As she unlocked the cage, she heard the dragon approach. She quickly took the Mystical Spell Caster by the arm and hid him behind a wall with her.

The dragon suddenly realized that the Mystical Spell Caster was gone and started sniffing around. Fire roared from his nose.

Not waiting for the dragon to find her, Mylene sneaked away with the Mystical Spell Caster. The dragon saw them right as they were exiting. He raced to them, but Mylene and the Mystical Spell Caster got out of the lair just in time.

The Mystical Spell Caster thanked Mylene. A swirl of color went into a dull wand. The dull wand started picking up color and soon turned into a bright, colorful

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wand. The Mystical Spell Caster got his magic back. He quickly cast a spell to trap the dragon inside.

The Mystical Spell Caster promised to help Mylene if she ever needed him.

Mylene thanked him and went home. She learned that you need to help others even if you don't believe, and if you don't believe, start believing.

She lay down, relaxed and thought about her adventurous day.

# The Universe's Mysteries

## By Hong-Tam La

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In science, many things are fascinating and some are mysterious. There are things that we know much about and some not so much. Space is one concept we do not understand quite yet. Many things are yet to be discovered.

We think that Earth is our own little world. We think not much beyond it, but there is much more. Scientists have not really discovered much about the solar system we live in, so much for the universe. The big question is how long it will take to learn about the world we live in and evolve from it. Will humanity thrive on another planet in the solar system or will we no longer exist? From a very small question such as why do people dream or something as big as how did life begin? Scientists have faced many conundrums. Yet, they are the people who we depend on for the sake of our survival and evolution.

Back then, there were amazing scientists, alchemists, and astronomers. Sir Isaac Newton discovered calculus, gravity, friction and even created his

own laws of motion, which are known as Newton's Laws of Motion. Another interesting scientist is Dmitri Mendeleev. He created what is now called the periodic table. Albert Einstein was an amazing theoretical physicist. He came up with the theory of relativity,  $E=mc^2$ . The scientists in the past created stepping-stones for the future studies, and these can help develop humanity. They could create a whole new future. However, science can pose a great danger to the world if we use it inappropriately such as making chemical weapons.

Science in my perspective can change humanity itself for the better or worse. If we use science to help us evolve and find a new home somewhere in the universe, humanity might survive. However, we as humans are using the Earth as a battlefield. Having chemical warfare is a misuse of science. Science is used to grow life, not to bring destruction. With the right tools and right goals, science can unlock the mysteries of the universe and bring hope to our humanity.



The author writes: "Hello, my name is Hong-Tam La. I am 10 years old. I love to read, watch TV, and draw or sketch in my free time. My family members are my mom, my dad, my little brother, and me. I also have two dogs. Their names are Panda and Venus. I go to BASIS Peoria and am a straight 'A' student. My favorite classes in school are Latin and Classics, which is also known as history, and science. I am also a peer tutor for Latin. I have been playing piano for three years. I also am learning how to play the violin. I have many hobbies. I am a bookworm, to be honest. I love reading historical fiction or learn about Greek mythologies. It also allows me to open a path in my mind to imagination. I also really like to draw. I like to draw with my friends and I like to do drawing contests. Many of my hobbies open a route to my imagination, creativity, and artistic ability."

# Camping with the Javelina

By Keegan Diaz

© 2019

**M**y school hosts an end-of-the-year project to go camping in Sedona. It was my very first night of camping in the Sedona wilderness at the Chavez campgrounds; my three friends and I tented together. The tent was very cramped. We got ready for bed and lay inside our sleeping bags. My two friends were snug in their sleeping bags; my other friend was sleeping on a yoga mat.

For me, it was hard to go to sleep. The rough and rocky earth beneath me was very much like laying across a bed of nails, but not nearly as comfortable. I eventually fell asleep.

After a couple hours, I woke up to a snorting sound outside of our tent. "Could it be some other people snoring in their own tent outside, or is it the javelinas?" I thought to myself as I sat up from my sleeping bag. The snoring didn't sound that human-like, so I predicted that they were javelinas. The window was right next to me, so I unzipped it slowly to create as little noise as possible.

I was right. My eyes widened when I saw four javelinas circling our tent. I was terrified when I realized that the only thing that separated me from death was the plastic material and a mesh screen of

the tent.

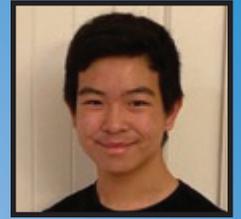
Horrifying things that the older students and teachers told me ran through my mind. I knew that their teeth were razor sharp and could pierce the material of the tent in the blink of an eye. There was just enough light from other tents to allow me to see their savage eyes and the yellow gleam of their teeth.

I held my breath as I heard one of them begin to snarl. It was a "grrrrrrr....." noise that I thought sounded more like a wolf than a wild boar.

I screamed in my head as I jumped back. Curling up into a little ball, I rocked back and forth in fear and thought to myself, "I will never underestimate how vicious you little pigs are." I sat there thinking about what my last words would be. All I could think of was, "Ahhhhh!!! IT TORE MY LEG OFF!!!"

Through the mesh window of my tent, I saw other tent lights go on and heard students whispering to one another. This one crazy girl got out of her tent and screamed, "There's javelinas outside my tent!"

"Are you crazy?!" I thought to myself as I looked. In my mind I was thinking, "You know they carry rabies. The



Keegan Diaz is a seventh-grader. He plays the piano, French horn, and guitar. Keegan loves camping, hiking, playing guitar, writing, and judo. When he grows up, he wants to be an ophthalmologist.

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teachers talked about this. They bite you, you die! Get back in your tent!” I looked away in fear thinking that the javelinas would charge toward her and shred her up, knees first.

Surprisingly, the javelinas didn’t charge. They didn’t even look in her direction. Instead, they stampeded in the opposite direction from her scream. It was a mass exodus of almost biblical proportions. There should have been an old guy with a staff.

I sighed in relief and lay back in my sleeping bag. My mind whirled with what I had just experienced. I had thought that we were the only ones in the desert. But now I realized that we weren’t the only ones living in the campground. We were sharing the campground with the javelinas. We came into their home and sort of just took over. The javelinas didn’t do anything wrong. They were only suspicious of us since we changed their surroundings to make us more comfortable. We invaded their space. I thought that we as a group should have let them be curious about their changed home instead of scaring them away from their home. They were more afraid of us than we were of them.

# The Siege of My House

## By Pranay Garg

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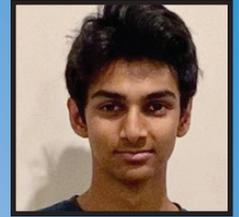
**W**as I safe? No, I could not allow myself that thought. I needed to stay vigilant. Still, it was strange; my mom said they would be coming at 7 p.m. sharp. It was currently 7:02 p.m., and I heard no doorbell — not that I had wanted to. The day before, my mom told me some guests were coming over to our house. Upon asking, I found out that the guests were the ones I feared the most; they were children of some of my mom’s social group of friends. These were the kids that I have never really gotten along with because I have absolutely nothing in common with them. They never talked to me, though I never really tried talking to them, either. To make matters more uncomfortable, they were all at least three years older than me.

My mom explained to me that the way her Indian social group worked, she had to throw a party at least once a year, which I thought was completely absurd. Regardless, my mom pushed me to at least interact and show that I was capable of light conversation. So I had to spend the entire day, which I planned for playing basketball at the neighborhood park, cleaning my entire room to make it look presentable, and now I sat waiting,

the frustration almost indescribable. The clock had moved to 7:03 p.m. Just then, I heard the dreaded melody of my doorbell heralding my imminent social demise. It had barely begun, and I already wished it was over. I walked out of my safe haven and prepared to meet the guests —

The first guest who arrived was someone I was at least familiar with. She used to babysit my sister and I, and was about ten years older than I was. She was still as cheerful as I remembered. She greeted me with an ebullient “Hey what’s up dude?” upon sight. I replied “Hi,” and immediately escorted her to my sister’s room. It was the usual “How tall you guys have gotten!” or “How old are you guys now?” So basically the easy questions; I had no difficulty with these. My sister was watching us passively in the background, and didn’t really have to talk because well, she can get away with not speaking because she is still young (I didn’t feel jealous or anything). After a few minutes of a conversation similar to one a grandfather and his grandson would have, the doorbell rang once again.

This was the big one. The group of teens I had mentioned earlier had all



**Pranay Garg is a freshman in high school. He enjoys hanging out with friends, playing guitar, and playing basketball. He wants to study medicine in college and become a doctor.**

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known each other for a very long time, and were a close-knit clique. This was another reason I could not talk to them normally. They all attended a different school than me and had avoided me at every other event I saw them at, so it would be accurate to say I had little to no connection with them other than family friends in name. Now this was the real challenge: asking them if they needed any food or water, if they were comfortable, or needed to know where the bathroom was, because I was the “host” of this event. They seemingly came in a horde and sat on the couch in the living room. Nobody said a word to me. It was as if they noticed me for the first time when I, very quietly, asked if they would like any refreshments. All eyes were upon me, and I dearly hoped the cold sweat that had started on my upper lip wasn't visible. Then a monotonous reply: “No thanks.” And just like that, I didn't feel wanted anymore, but that was a good sign for me. I quickly escaped to my room and thought about my next course of action.

I sat there mindlessly for what must have been an hour, until it was time for dinner. And it was my job to take everyone to the dining room for it, so I grudgingly returned to the living room where I had left the guests. They were all conversing contentedly on the living room couch, and again, it was awkward

to interrupt. In a more confident tone, I called out, “Do you all want dinner?” I had no control over my voice, so I had no clue how loud I spoke, or if I was even speaking rudely. Regardless, they received the message, and I led them to the kitchen where typical Indian food was lined up on the counter. They started shoveling food on plastic plates from aluminum containers, then leisurely sat down at the dining table. I then had two options: sit down with them and suffer a world of agony by rummaging through my head for nonexistent conversation topics and make the situation more awkward, or seek refuge in my room. Choosing the latter, I came to a realization: It was 10 p.m. Over the course of three hours, these people had invaded my house, taken my free time away, and rendered me powerless and awkward in my own home all in the name of social obligation. Although I was supposed to be relieved they were leaving soon, I couldn't help but feel tricked. My beloved home had been besieged by interlopers. What is one supposed to do or feel in such a situation? I know that as I grow older there will be many such situations where I need to be part of a social group and learn to make light conversation. I also know that at some point, the thought of having to be in social gatherings will not make me so uncomfortable or resentful. It's a part of life, and a part of my cultural community. I just don't think acceptance will come anytime soon.

# Expectations vs. Reality: My First Visit to London

By Ethan Park

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When I think of London, the first two things that come to mind are: Harry Potter and Sherlock Holmes. When I was in middle school, I watched all of the Harry Potter and Sherlock Holmes movies. I always assumed London would be a cold and dreary place. The characters in the movies were always wearing long clothes and drinking hot tea, so I thought everyone in London would wear long coats and drink lots of tea. I was wrong. In school, I was taught that London was like colonial Boston. So, in my mind, this meant brick houses and even more tea. I was still wrong. Some of my friends who had been to London described it as an opposite of the United States. I did not know what to make of those descriptions, at all.

This past summer, my parents, my younger brother, Brian, and I went to London for the first time. During the flight, I decided to stay up the whole flight to watch Harry Potter and Sherlock Holmes in anticipation for our visit. As we arrived in Heathrow Airport, my mom said Sarah, one of her friends, was going to pick us up at the parking lot. As we got

off the airplane, I was unprepared for the humidity: the unending, sweat-inducing, breath-stealing humidity. London was supposed to be cold, but everyone was already sweating and sticky. As we entered the airport, I checked to see if there were any air conditioning to cool us off. I examined the airport and I saw no air conditioning — only fans, which were taken by other, luckier, people. I searched for the nearest airport shop to buy water. My parents said it was fine and decided to buy two cold water bottles to cool us all down — one for my parents and one for Brian and myself. I let Brian drink first, but without realizing it, he drank three quarters of the bottle, leaving me with just a taste. It was not enough to combat the heat. We thought about going out to the parking lot to wait for my mom's friend Sarah, but decided to stay inside in hopes that it was at least a little bit cooler.

As soon as Sarah arrived, Brian and I rushed inside the car, and Brian turned the air conditioning on as soon as he could. When they finished loading everything, my dad went to the wrong side of the car and tried to get into the driver's seat



The author writes: "Hello, I am Ethan Park. I am a sophomore at Arizona State University doing a statistics major. I was born in Boston, Massachusetts. I enjoy playing video games, making graphics, writing, video editing, helping other people, and listening to music. A lot of my friends and other people think I am crazy for a math major to enjoy writing as a hobby. Also, I enjoy learning American history, especially from the 1920s to the 1970s."

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instead. Everyone laughed. As we are getting out of the parking lot, I asked my dad what it was like to be sitting on what would be the driver's seat in America.

He replied, "It's like the car is driving by itself."

Brian replied instantly, "Like a transformer?"

We all laughed again. A few minutes later, Sarah said she was going to show us Bristol Harbor. Halfway to the harbor, Brian fell asleep on my left shoulder, which he soaked with all the sweat from his hair. I was uncomfortable, but I decided to let him sleep. Sarah pointed out that we were going to go eat lunch first before we go to the harbor. Fifteen minutes later, we arrived at a fish and chips restaurant. The restaurant looked very old and very small.

As we entered the restaurant, I saw that everything was small. Both the cooking and dining area were miniscule — about the size of my living room at home. All of the tables and chairs were tiny. The waitress showed us where we were going to sit. There was not any room at the adult table, so Brian and I had to sit at our own table. Even in London, we were relegated to the kids' table. As I examined more of the restaurant, I could tell it was old and not well maintained. I saw wood peeling off from the walls and that there were only a few fans to cool the place off from the unbearable weather. It reminded me of a haunted house.

As the waitress came and asked for our drinks, I ordered ice water as soon as she finished her question. The waitress stared at me with a look that suggested I was speaking a language she had never heard before. There was an uncomfortable moment of silence during which I was convinced she was judging me for choosing water. Was this something that was not done

in Great Britain?

A few seconds later, she asked, "Which type of water would you like?"

Now, I was even more confused when she asked me this question. I thought there was only one type of water on this planet. I asked politely for clarification, and she pointed and showed me the beverage section of the menu. As I looked at the beverage section, I saw there were two water choices, which were still water and sparkling water. I almost wanted to facepalm really hard, but instead I politely ordered still water. As I finally finished ordering, Brian ordered Coca-Cola as his beverage. As the waitress brought both of our beverages to our table, Brian and I ordered medium-sized fish and chips. I was excited to eat it because I never had this dish before in my life. I heard many things about fish and chips from my friends who had been to London before. Some of them say it is unappetizing while some consider it to be one of their all-time favorite meals. I did not know what to expect, so I hoped for the best to come.

As both of our fish and chips meals arrived at our table, I picked up my utensils and got the first bite as soon as possible. I found it a bit bland in my mouth. I wondered and questioned how some of my friends considered it to be one of their all-time favorite foods. I decided to add both salt and vinegar to make it more appetizing. With both the salt and vinegar added on the fish and chips, I was living the dream. I recommended to Brian to eat it with both salt and vinegar to have the full experience. Five minutes later, I finished my fish and chips, and I saw that everyone had not finished their meals. I got out of my chair and walked across the restaurant. I asked my parents if I could order a second fish and chips meal for myself, but they were

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all shocked at how I finished so fast compared with everyone else. I even saw my waitress shocked in the background. Unfortunately, both of my parents refused the offer, so Brian let me have his leftovers instead since he was already stuffed. After five more minutes, I finished all of his leftovers, which made me officially stuffed. As we were leaving the fish and chips restaurant, Sarah said we were going to the harbor later in the evening instead and we were going to stop at her house for everyone to take a nap before we all went.

As soon as we got there and got on the front porch, my dad joked how much smaller it was than the ones in our neighborhood. We all laughed. Sarah's house reminded me of Privet Drive in the Harry Potter series. As we entered inside the house, everything was small and close together. I looked for a cabinet under the stairs and was very disappointed when all I found were stairs. All of the rooms and furniture were small. I felt like I was a giant, which gave me a feeling of claustrophobia. I saw that there was no air conditioning inside, but just a lot of fans in every room. I questioned and wondered how Sarah could live without central air conditioning. Sarah showed Brian and me where we were going to sleep for the night. We were going to sleep in the living room on the floor due to the lack of rooms inside the house. Unfortunately, there was only one fan in the whole living room, and Brian's bed was closer to it than mine, which meant I was going to have a much more difficult time to sleep than Brian did with all the humidity. Everyone went to take a nap, but I decided not to since I was not tired.

Later that day as we walked in the harbor, I examined the buildings and their architecture style. It

reminded me a lot of Colonial Boston. The building style and culture were really similar. In Boston, you can see a lot of British colonial influence in the architecture and street layout, whereas London on the other hand is not really gridded like in Boston. They do have some similar building styles. London has also a big mixture of architecture from different places, but they are not skyscraper heavy like New York City. I saw a lot of teenagers and young adults drinking and smoking cigarettes on the streets, which made me feel a little uncomfortable as that is not seen as much at home. At some points, I had to block my nose due to how strong it was. I saw an old red telephone booth at every block. No one would use it, but it was cool to see that Great Britain kept them.

As we went inside the marketplace at the harbor, we decided to take a break and to eat dinner. I saw a small pie restaurant that I was interested in, so I pointed out I wanted to try some pie. Everyone was fine with it, and we all got pie for dinner. When we got inside, I was astonished how many different types of pie there were. In the United States, I had only apple pie, cherry pie, blueberry pie, strawberry pie, and pumpkin pie. Now in Great Britain, you could see a lot of different types of pie. My parents and Sarah ordered a chicken and mushroom pie with water. Brian chose pork with Coca-Cola for his dinner, and I chose beef pot pie with tea for my dinner. As our beverages came to the table, I got my first sip of British tea. It was both sweet and bitter. It reminded me a lot of Thai iced tea. It was so good that I quickly drank a quarter of the whole cup. Later on, my parents and Brian offered if they could have a sip of my tea, so I accepted the offer and let them all have a sip of my tea. Brian liked it so much that he drank a lot of my tea and asked our parents if

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he could get tea like mine. Sorrowfully, my parents refused his offer. I felt pity for him, so I gave him my drink and told him he could have it instead while I had his Coca-Cola.

As we were finished with our dinner, we looked around more of the harbor. As we were looking around in the harbor, my mom shouted my name in the distance. I turned around and ran to my mom as soon as possible. When I arrived, my mom pointed and showed me that there were Harry Potter cakes and cupcakes in the bakery. I was astonished that they had them here. I was even more shocked and amazed that my mom knew I was a fan of Harry Potter.

As we were wrapping up the harbor, we all thanked Sarah for the tour and for showing us the place. Luckily, the harbor was close to where Sarah lived. As soon as we got back to Sarah's house, I took a shower as soon as possible due to how sticky and uncomfortable I felt the whole day. As soon as I got in the shower, I felt like I never wanted to leave and to stay there forever. Unfortunately, after fifteen minutes in the shower, Brian was knocking on the door to hurry me up in order for him to shower next. I turned off the shower and dressed up as soon as possible.

As soon as Brian finished his shower, we brushed our teeth and headed to the living room. As I lay down on the hardwood floor, Brian had already fallen asleep, and I still felt a bit sticky and uncomfortable from the humidity, but it was not as bad as it was in the beginning.

I tried to close my eyes, but I was not able to sleep. First, I tried taking off my blankets from my body, but that did not work. Second, I tried setting the fan to be stronger, but then I realized it was already set the strongest it could be. So, that did not work as well. Next, I got up and drank ice cold water in the kitchen. I felt colder, but as soon as I lay down, I felt sticky and uncomfortable again. I was jealous of how Brian fell asleep so fast.

Instead of trying to sleep, I looked back on the whole day. I was shocked at how things were different from the Harry Potter and Sherlock Holmes movies to the actual place. I learned that you could not infer what a place truly looks like until you have fully been there for yourself. It is like saying you cannot judge a book by its cover. You should not form an opinion of someone, or something, based purely on what is seen on the surface, because after taking a deeper look, the person or thing may be very different than what was expected.

# 3 Poems by Kent Thomas

## Words

© 2019

Words can be misleading,  
Actions are more true.  
The way you are going  
You do the things you do.

Meaning often empty,  
Words said here and there.  
Doing is saying plenty,  
It shows how you really care.

The reasons are many  
You feel lost and confused.  
Not understanding  
It's inside of you.

The world we travel  
Is way too fast.  
It is words with meaning  
That are gonna last.

Make no further promises,  
It's all inside your head.  
Words without real meaning  
Rather not be said.



Kent Thomas' first book, "Lines of Sanity," is now available at [www.los-kt.com](http://www.los-kt.com). He is the director of music for Creative Drill Sergeants and a member of the music group Vets Jam Band, helping wounded armed forces members overcome their challenges by finding their spirit in their soul songs.

# The Drummer Boy

© 2019

On a hot summer day in Pennsylvania on July 3, 1863, the Butternut gathered  
Under a canopy of trees.

Over 200 cannons accompanied them for the trial of life that was about to begin.  
Many didn't make it — dead somehow.  
Their souls still live there — in the hallowed ground.

A 10-year-old drummer boy in front of them all,  
Cannons exploding around them — the air thick with mini balls.  
Many brave souls tried to hide.  
His gallant valor walked tall — so many to die.

The madness dispensed all around — they did know.  
His spirit grew tall as he led the show.  
Across the field of death the Butternut crawled.  
Laced with crimson puddles — broken parts fall.

Men laid down in pieces — regiments prostrated on the ground.  
The drummer boy kept walking forward — where a few brave men could be found.

His hands held a weapon — much more powerful than the gun.  
With the spirit he gave them — he pounded his drum.

15,000 brave souls started out — all of them gone  
The spirit from the drummer boy survives — his inspiration lives on.

It is the feeling he gave them — the spirit of a king.  
It makes the song of death much easier to sing.

# The Cry of the Quail

© 2019

The early morning glimmer relieves a night long gone.  
He sits alone — on a cactus as his throne.

Calling out for his mate.  
He fears his cry — too late,  
Finding it all to desiccate.

He traveled far  
Across the desert vast.  
Standing alone  
Knowing he won't last.

The sun is too hot.  
The cactus too sharp.  
No water around.  
He sees his world fall apart.

His weeping squall cries out.  
No one there.  
No fear.  
He sings alone for none to hear.

Seeing the way —  
Knowing danger is all around.  
Nothing else matters.  
Nowhere to be found.

His insistent song continues all day  
On his throne crying away.

# A Call to Writers for The Blue Guitar Jr.

Open to children and teens who write  
and to adults who write  
for children and teens

**T**he Blue Guitar Jr. magazine seeks literary submissions for its next annual issue for children and teens. Submissions from children and teens and adults who write for children and teens are sought by Oct. 1, 2020, in all genres — fiction, poetry, plays, creative nonfiction — all geared to appeal to youthful audiences. Writers must submit original work and must live in Arizona. Simultaneous submissions will be accepted, but the writer must notify the magazine as soon as possible if the work is accepted elsewhere. It is free to submit, and submissions may be made in multiple genres. Please include your name and the best way to contact you on your submission. To submit or for further information, e-mail Editor Rebecca Dyer at [rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org](mailto:rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org). For additional information, visit [www.theblueguitarmagazine.org](http://www.theblueguitarmagazine.org).

# A Call to Artists for The Blue Guitar Jr.

Open to children and teens who create art  
and to adults who create art  
for children and teens

**T**he Blue Guitar Jr. magazine seeks art submissions for its next annual issue for children and teens. Submissions from children and teens and adults who create art for children and teens are sought by Oct. 1, 2020, in all media geared to appeal to youthful audiences. Artists must submit original work and must live in Arizona. Simultaneous submissions will be accepted, but the artist must notify the magazine as soon as possible if the work is accepted elsewhere. It is free to submit, and submissions may be made in multiple mediums; up to 5 images can be submitted. Artists are encouraged to submit images of work by e-mail; please provide high-resolution JPEGs of 300 dpi. Images must be identified in the e-mail with the artist's name, contact information, titles of works, dates and mediums. Please include your name and the best way to contact you. To submit or for more information, e-mail Editor Richard Dyer at [richarddyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org](mailto:richarddyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org). For additional information, visit [www.theblueguitarmagazine.org](http://www.theblueguitarmagazine.org).

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# Meet the staff of The Blue Guitar Jr. magazine



**Elena Thornton, publisher:** Founder and president of The Arizona Consortium for the Arts, Elena is an educator, artist and poet and lives in Phoenix. Reach her at [info@artizona.org](mailto:info@artizona.org).

**Rebecca Dyer, co-editor:** A Tucson native, Rebecca is a poet, journalist and teacher residing in Mesa with her husband, Rick, her Blue Guitar co-editor. Reach her at [rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org](mailto:rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org).



**Richard H. Dyer Jr., co-editor:** Richard (married to Rebecca, above) is the editor for two news websites and two monthly newspapers in the East Valley, a photographer and a welded-steel sculptor. Reach him at [richarddyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org](mailto:richarddyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org).

**Marjory Boyer, cover design artist for The Blue Guitar Jr.:** Marjory, of Scottsdale, is an award-winning artist, muralist and an acrylic-painting instructor. Her biography and contact information are available at [mboyerart.com](http://mboyerart.com).





*Blue Guitar Jr.  
will return in  
2020!*

*“Things  
as they are  
are  
changed  
upon  
the  
blue guitar.”*