



Winners of the 2009 National Day of Writing Contest

Middle School Poetry

Claire Willis	1	St. George
Ian McCarthy	2	St. George
Alicia Pastor	3	Mt. Carmel

Middle School Prose

Kelly Couget	1	Mt. Carmel
Nick Silverman	2	St. George
Ebony Oguinn	3	Edna Karr

High School Poetry

Dominique Wilthew	1	Mt. Carmel
Chelsea Ward	2	Mt. Carmel
Xandrea Ross	3	Warren Easton

High School Prose

James Michael Bell	1	Hahnville
Lauren Trentacoste	2	
Elizabeth Barbier	3	Mt. Carmel

Claire Willis
Mrs. Musa
7th English
8 October 2009

The Levee

It protects the city from floods

Provides a place to run, play, bike

The green grass crunches between your feet

And you can feel a cool breeze

There's a raging river on one side

And a busy road on the other

But in between is a haven

Perfect and peaceful

Even with a frenzied surrounding it is a sanctuary

Big boats passing by

Cars screeching, honking, and engines revving

Here are trains that come by

Clinking and clanking, too loud and obnoxious

The morning brings the sun out

It shines long and bright

The heat can't hide the beauty

The water glistens, the grass is greener than ever

As the sun goes down

The sky turns pink and orange

It looks almost like a painting

The trees cast shadows and the leaves flutter in the wind

Then at night everything goes dark

And the moon comes out

Like a big flashlight it brightens the night

Along with the glow of yellow street lights

I go to bed and think about going back tomorrow

Every moment of the day is perfect

On top of the levee

Ian McCarthy
Language Arts
Mrs. Musa
October 8, 2009

An Ode to the Audubon Park Trail

A snake
Weaving through tress
And lakes
And ponds
People step on you
Ducks poop on you
But you stay
You do not move
At night
You are
Secure
Black
And you still seem alive
You provide directions
To those who will follow
A solid path
You are hit with golf balls and
Cars drive on you
You are a snake
Trapped to the earth
Never to lift off
To slither away
Forever
Always being stepped on
You are
A snake

Alicia Pastor
Mrs. Smith
Mount Carmel Academy
8th Grade

Sights

My city is quite peaceful in the early hours of the day,
Before businesses open up, before children begin to play.
When the haunting fog is resting in the damp stone ground,
While I'm sitting on cathedral steps with no one else around.

With an oil lamp flickering, giving the slightest hint of sight,
As my gaze slips down the street, eyeing tiny dots of light.
The clip-clop of a horses hooves, beating the virgin streets,
While saturated air finds its way to my bare feet.

In the distance I hear a car horn and a screen door slam shut,
An 'open' sign illuminate, as the city begins to start up.
My hour with the city is over, but it will be back again
For my city is my sister, my mother, my friend.

Kelly Couget
September 20, 2009
English I Honors
Ms. Smith
8th Grade
Mount Carmel Academy

I walk into the little café, and immediately, the smells hit me. I feel my mouth begin to water as I walk to the counter of Café Du Monde. I feel like I cannot get there fast enough. I walk past the pastel green tables and the other costumers enjoying their beignets. The floor stretches before as I walk to the counter. When, I finally reach my destination, my mouth is almost overflowing with drool.

“One order of beignets, please,’ I request.

“Sure thin’, honey,” the cashier replies in her southern accent.

As she walks away, I look through the window at the big, silver machines rolling out the dough. I see the workers frying the raw beignets in the hot cooking oil. I watch as she powders the finished beignets. I walk down to the cash register to pay for my personal heaven.

“Two dollars and fifty-five cents,” she says.

I reach into my black leather wallet and pay the cashier. I watch has she reaches into the dark, black cash register to receive my change. I grab my beignets and sit down at a clean table. I tear one apart and watch as the steam lazily floats into the air. I slowly bring it to my waiting mouth. As my teeth dig into the fluffy pastry, I taste it all: the powdered sugar, the fried dough, and the wonderful combination of the two. I finish them all too quickly. Before I knew it, my plate was empty. I grab my purse and backpack and walk out the door. I place my things in the back of my mom’s big SUV and climb into the front seat. As she drives away I watch as the little café disappears in the distance.

Nick Silverman
Mrs. Musa
Language Arts
October 5, 2009

Conquering Monkey Hill

Monkey Hill, located in Audubon Zoo, is like a vast mountain in the midst of the below sea-level terrain of New Orleans. Almost every child growing up in New Orleans has memories of scaling the mountain and running full speed down the hill without wiping out. A visit to the Audubon Zoo always begins with a mad dash from the entrance direct to Monkey Hill.

As you approach the area, you can hear Monkey Hill call out to you that it is the highest point in New Orleans and challenges you to climb to its peak to become the king of the mountain. All around, the sounds of water flowing down the hill, shrill screaming voices of children, and thumping of small feet running down the hill are heard. On wet days, your feet come in contact with slippery grass, slushy mud, and hard pebbles as you carefully navigate your way up to the top of the hill. At the top of the hill the wild, musty smell of nature is still all around you as if you were in the middle of an African savannah. Strong breezes blow gritty, foul-tasting dust into your mouth as you take in the view of the nearby animal exhibits below.

As your mind wanders, you dream of what is to come, you imagine that Money Hill must have dreams or secrets of its own. Could it be dreaming that it is a large, high mountain peak that rises above all the surrounding trees to look out over the entire zoo? What secrets are hidden in with Monkey Hill? Could it be that there is a secret underground network of tunnels below the hill? It is exciting to think that those tunnels may lead directly into the habitants of all the animals.

Suddenly your mind stops wandering, you realize that you have a mission to accomplish. You run wildly down the hilly terrain in pursuit of an ice-cold, sweet-tasting snowball from the vending cart at the bottom of the hill.

James Michael Bell
October 29, 2009
Hahnville High School
Grade 12
Deborah Unger

Skyline from Starboard

Developing sea legs became substantially easier over time. In fact, I had no trouble adjusting to the undulations underneath my home for the next few days. Dinner was in an hour, so I decided to eschew unpacking and go immediately to the top deck where I could watch out progression down the powerful, rushing currents of the Mississippi River.

Pulling away from New Orleans, I saw the skyline. Before that night, I had never seen it look so beautiful. The sunset was falling slowly behind the tall skyscrapers and the Superdome. The various heights of the buildings and the reflection of the sun off the windows made it look surreal. It was hard to believe that my city-the one that I pass through regularly-could look so beautiful, but the imprinted image of the New Orleans skyline at dusk never ceases to remind me of the true nature of my city's beauty.

Along the river's levee-covered banks, I saw the end of a long day's work. River workers were docking their boats to clock-out. As the sun left the sky, the city underwent complete metamorphosis. Various gleams of light emitted themselves from the windows of employees returning to their homes, the orange-tinted dock lights, and the large, ostentatious Harrah's Casino sign. Other sources of light showed as well, including the St. Louis Cathedral's bell tower, which was also bright unless juxtaposed with the intense purple flashing of the Casino. The Crescent City and its many lights, like candles and their flames, became noticeably brighter when inundated by darkness.

Nighttime in New Orleans, unlike other famous cities, has a unique trait that brings about vivacious rejuvenation as it shifts from day to night. Days there seem to go on endlessly as was apparent on the cruise ship that night. As I traveled downriver, though I could not see them, the waves of the Mississippi sloshing against the side of the boat were audible; however, night seemed to have a calming effect on the river's daytime temperament. It no longer sounded like large hands slapping the bottom of the hull. Instead, we seemed to glide gently atop the waves. It was amazing to feel the change in the river because few things so powerful possess the ability to relinquish that power, even for a short time.

Looking back upon my city as I began to notice the distance between her and I grow, I felt reluctant to leave something with which I had just become truly acquainted. All the afternoon's sensory experiences were culminating, leave me with only mental image of what I had seen that day. Appearing like a local oil painting-somewhat distorted and abstract in its brushstrokes and excitingly vivid in its flamboyant coloring-the image of the skyline as time progressed over the course of the evening and into the night remained painted permanently in my mind.

Laruen Trentacoste
Mrs. Patton
English IV Period 1
September 25, 2009

The Essence of Jackson Square

There is no city as unique as the city of New Orleans, Louisiana. New Orleans has bright flavors and colorful buildings. It is not only known for its dated architecture, but it is also recognized for its wide variety of people and culture. It has an assortment of diverse people, anywhere from extremely prosperous, to the homeless on the street, to the Jesus-loving, or to the fortune-tellers outside the church. New Orleans's local food has rich spices that could rupture the taste buds on unsuspecting tourists. However, not all of these aspects represent New Orleans as wholly as Jackson Square does. The most pivotal elements that signify Jackson Square are the art around the garden, the fortune-tellers on the sidewalks, and the Jackson Square Garden, the core of Jackson Square.

Around the fence of Jackson Square is an assortment of diverse and colorful art. The fence is lined with grand posters of splashing colors and small, dignified portraits of people. The sound of the people admiring the art rises into the air like a cloud. The artists themselves are in such deep thought that one can taste the depths of their souls. The smell of fresh paint drifts into the noses of passersby, stopping them in the tracks to take a peek at the artists' creations. The textures of the paint on the canvas pop out, displaying the story behind the artists' painting. All of these elements make Jackson Square a unique place containing creative and exceptional ideas.

After inhabitants admire the art along the fences, they stroll down the sidewalk of Jackson Square, which is lined with fortune-tellers who emit a sense of mystery and suspense. These tellers sit at petite tables, decorated with odd trinkets and ornaments. The fortune-tellers

are dressed in frilly clothes with peculiar bangles and necklaces around their wrists and necks. They smell of strong incense and of mild sweat from baking in the sun all day. One can taste the aura of mischief surrounding these psychics. The shrill and mysterious voices of the fortune-tellers call victims over to witness their unexpected future. The echoes of the fortune-teller's scheme to collect money from unfortunate tourists are only heard by the pigeons that nest near their feet. These fortune-tellers make Jackson Square a place of startling mystery and mischief.

The mist of secrecy; however, does not descend into the heart of Jackson Square, which is the Jackson Square Garden. The garden is one of the only places in the French Quarter that has a visible block of greenery. Grand, majestic trees make their home here and are accompanied by the numerous pigeons in the French Quarter. Tired tourists are seen resting their blistering feet in the calming and serene grass in the garden. The sound of birds singing makes a lulling tune that hums restless people into a sense of tranquility. The smell of green grass creates a refreshing bubble, which surrounds the whole block. The taste of fresh air lingers in the mouths of people who stride past the gardens. The textures of the leaves on the trees lure people to take in the true beauty of the Jackson Square Garden. The beautiful trees and fresh air make Jackson Square Garden a place of great peace and harmony.

The main aspects that make Jackson Square distinctive are the art, fortune-tellers, and the Jackson Square Garden. The art makes Jackson Square bright and stunning. Creativity flows through the air, and people breathe in this originality like it is a necessity for life. Fortune-tellers hold Jackson Square under a cloud of anonymity and suspense. The garden in Jackson Square provides the life of Jackson Square. It is a resting area for tired travelers and pigeons. The garden is a bubble of fresh air, renewing energy and spirit to all who pass by the grand tress. These aspects make Jackson Square a distinctive and memorable place in the French Quarter

attracting not only tourists but also residents of New Orleans. Without Jackson Square, New Orleans would not be half as unique of a city as it already is.