

Welcome to my home

By Elizabeth Bousquet
PEOPLES ACADEMY, GRADE 12

Jambo!
And welcome to my country,
My country, my continent, my world, my home.
A home ravaged by
War,
Famine,
Conflict,
Disaster,
Disease.
The tangible diseases:
Malaria,
Cholera,
Typhoid,
TB,
AIDS.
The intangible diseases:
Hatred,
Violence,
Exploitation.
My home is mine.
But somehow it has fallen into the hands of others,
Others who think they know how to fix it.
But all they do is break and leave.
Some stay and plead with the world to open their eyes.
Open their eyes to a crisis.
But all they seem to see is desert and fear,
A fear of what they could never hope to understand.
My home is beautiful but it has been broken,
Broken from the inside and also from the outside.
Broken homes,
Broken people,
Broken governments and distorted power,
Broken families,
And spirits about to reach their breaking point.
And so I say again,
Jambo!
And welcome to my home.

"Africa"

By Kay Bushman
U-32 MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 7

Toto plays as a slideshow of images begins to flash in front of my eyes.
A group of school children sit at failing desks in a small earthen classroom
Men in tasseled hats beat tall drums as children dance nearby
A giraffe runs across a sea of tall, brown grass, spotted with gnarled trees
Flies land on the face of a little one
Cracked yellow earth meets the dark feet of a thirsty child
A mother's face is lined in pain as she wonders how she will make it through tomorrow
Birds are startled into flight above a jungle of green
Five gorillas lay motionless on the ground, ropes binding their feet
A little girl with sad eyes and bare feet eats peanut butter from a packet
Boys chase a soccer ball down a street lined with houses
As the flashing images stop, echoes of "I miss the rains down in Africa...I miss the rains down in Africa...I miss the rains down in Africa..." continue in my head with an almost haunting quality.

Darfur

By Kelby Bell
SPAULDING HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 11

Africa...
What comes into my mind when I hear that?
Darfur...
I hear struggle and lost promises of life,
I hear shots in the distance,
And see the courage of silent men in the clearing,
I watch as mothers hold no hope
And children have no childhood
I see a country without stability
And without the promise of tomorrow
I see a country that could be destined for peace
But without the means to get there
I see one big dark cloud covering them
But through the rain a way will be found
I see compelling people living a life unfairly.

Rwanda

By Jenna Marie Rickson
ESSEX HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 11

The radio blares
from a small corner
of the beaten hut
threatening, hating
the room goes silent
for all of a moment
before another voice
bounds through the speaker
"Kill the tall trees!"
rings, echoes in my ears
the bowl slips out of
my hands and shatters
into millions of tiny
clay pieces; the hairs on
my arms prick upward
spreading a ripple of
goose bumps over my skin and
fear in my soul
the lives of the Tutsi's
will be changed dramatically
my existence solely in
the hands of God.

Bad memory

By Ben Conneman
SPAULDING HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 9
The most embarrassing thing I have ever done was when I was a young kid and I had to go to the bathroom. I walked into the first bathroom I could find. Something was odd; all the toilets were the sit-down ones. Then, while I was washing my hands, this really attractive young lady walked in. She asked me, "Why are you in here?"
So I said jokingly, "Well, it's a bathroom. Why do you think?"
She said, "This is the girl's bathroom, so you probably shouldn't be in here." My face was so red from blushing and I was so embarrassed that I started to cry. I ran out of the bathroom and found my mom and told her what had happened. She laughed and I told her I wanted to go home. But in the end I learned something: before I ever go into a bathroom I really need to look to see if it is the guys or the girls.

Don't be embarrassed

By Jah Robertson
BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 11
What changes a person?
The smile that fades
was once so sunny,
now hidden away.
Who determines your mood?
Who says what is right?
Who decided day
would be brighter than night?
What makes them laugh
when you hold your head high?
Is it guilt or truth
in those tears in your eyes?
They laugh out of fear,
ignorance,
Too enveloped
to discover, figure out, know.
So don't be embarrassed
to be the unique you
because I'm not embarrassed
When I am called geek.

Next time I'll know

By Tori Bissonette
ALBERT D. LAWTON MIDDLE SCHOOL
GRADE 7

Last summer I took a week-long sewing class. The room we were in was also used as an art classroom, so there were some easels in the back of the room. On the day before the last day, I was sewing at the end of the row of sewing machines. Someone called my name and I stood up quickly, but my foot was caught in the foot pedal

cord. The force pulled the sewing machine right off the table. I happened to glance back, saw it falling, and just barely managed to catch it. Because it was heavy and my foot was still caught, I stumbled.

I bumped into one of the easels and the domino effect happened. One easel fell over, then another one, and so on and so on. Everyone looked for the source of the noise, and there I stood, holding a sewing machine with the cord around my foot and a bunch of easels now on the floor. I was so embarrassed.

Now that I think about it, it wouldn't have been so bad if I had just laughed and said something stupid, yet funny, like "I meant to do that." Next time I knock over a sewing machine and some easels I'll know what to do.

Embarrassing

By Brendan Mulholland
RIPTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, GRADE 6

When I was six, my mom signed me up for ballet lessons along with my twin sister Meghan. Then my mom called my dad to tell him the news. He told my older brothers, Sean and Malcolm. They teased me about it. After a few lessons I kind of liked it. Then we had a recital in front of 1,000 people. I was the only dude in the group. We got through it OK, but it was the most embarrassing moment of my life.

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MAY 5, 2009

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