

RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL OF ANN ARBOR
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the **Steiner** TIMES
Bringing meaning to education

RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL OF ANN ARBOR • SUMMER 2005

FIFTH GRADERS FIND GLORY IN CULMINATION OF GREEK STUDIES

by Lindsay Passmore

Student musicians blew a rousing trumpet fanfare in a whipping wind. The entire student body watched as fifth graders from three states marched in procession across the back field. Moments later the procession had gathered around a ceremonial table where a tunic-clad teacher lit the Olympic flame and the assembled group re-enacted the rites of ancient athletes, asking the favor of Zeus, Apollo, and Athena. This opening ceremony set the stage for the Rudolf Steiner School's annual *Pentathlon*, a day each May devoted to our fifth graders and their guests from six other schools in Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. The students had completed their study of ancient Greece by training for this day's events: the long run and 50 yard dash, the long jump, javelin, discus, and Greek wrestling.

These youngsters don't simply study history. They *do* history. And in the process, they make some decisions that will help shape their identities in the adolescent years to come.

How? Consider some scenes from the day. A girl loses a visceral, 15-minute wrestling match and weeps as her mother hugs her; moments later, when she has recovered somewhat from the physical and emotional challenge of the face-to-face struggle, she spontaneously rushes over to her opponent—and cheers him on as he faces his next competitor. A boy starts to stomp out of the wrestling arena

when he loses his first match after winning numerous previous rounds, but then stops stomping and goes back—to shake the victor's hand. A new student approaches the competition with great determination, every cell of his body seemingly locked into focus for each event—and he wins honors in nearly every one. Another student, personally challenged by the competitive spirit of the occasion, makes half-hearted attempts in a couple of events, but seems a completely different person in the next one, having privately decided to give it her best.

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RSSAA's Jackson Greenstone discovered that he was the fastest of all in the long-run event.



Athletes were awarded willow crowns for displaying the greatest skill and the best form in each event.



The opening ceremony was both festive and dramatic, thanks to musicians from the 7th and 8th grades.

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"Our highest endeavor must be to develop free human beings, who are able in and of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives."

— Rudolf Steiner

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RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL TO CELEBRATE 25TH ANNIVERSARY

On September 4, 1980, the Rudolf Steiner School of Ann Arbor opened its doors in a three-room building with just 10 students; 25 years later, we have come a long way! We have evolved from renting that small space from the Seventh Day Adventist Church on Packard Road to owning two lovely wooded campuses and enrolling over 300 students. We have moved beyond our

incubation as a completely teacher-run school to one which employs both full- and part-time staff to help manage our business, facilities, and outreach initiatives. And as the only K-12 Waldorf school in Michigan, we have become more than a local institution;

indeed, we attract families from a 50-mile radius. This upcoming school year, we will celebrate both our roots and our incredible growth. Throughout the years, vision, hard work, great acts of generosity, and serendipitous twists of fortune have marked our journey.

There have been plenty of hurdles and plenty of milestones. When student demand exceeded the capacity of our original space, the School made a new home in Milan. When bussing students from Ann Arbor became too challenging and enrollment continued to grow, the Board of Trustees relocated the School back to Ann Arbor and purchased the Newport Campus, buttressed by the support of two generous families who guaranteed the loan. With that debt soon retired, School leaders began to dream of extending the curriculum beyond 8th grade to the full 12-year program Rudolf Steiner himself envisioned. Then came the high school, and, as we know, the story continues.

The exciting part is, it has just begun! After 25 years, Waldorf education has come of age in Ann Arbor, but we are still a young school with dreams and challenges before us. All of us—parents, faculty, students, alumni, and friends—are characters in the story that will one day be told about our School's second quarter century. Stay tuned for details, and join us in celebrating the path that brought us here, as well as the opportunities we have to shape Waldorf education's next 25 years in Southeast Michigan.



At 25 years, many of our alumni are now young adults and some share their gifts at the Lower School. Here, Luke Lusenden (Class of 2002) and fifth-grader Jessica Ballard jam in a Blues Brothers routine at the Seventh Grade's Spring Talent Show. Luke has been helping out in the kindergarten and aftercare programs for the past two years.

FIFTH-GRADERS FIND GLORY IN CULMINATION OF GREEK STUDIES

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Parents seemed to have quite a day of it, too. Many Ann Arbor and Detroit Waldorf families housed guests who had traveled long distances to participate in the athletic games. Throughout the day these guests talked incessantly about the hospitality of their Michigan hosts. The festivities included a dinner and folk dancing in the school gym the night before, and one result was a joyful feeling of camaraderie and excitement pervading the games. At one point a "coffee brigade" of RSSAA moms appeared in the rain at the 50 yard dash, whipped out cups, and cheerfully poured steaming hot beverages made-to-order for astonished bystanders. A bit later, RSSAA dad and trustee Robin Grosshuesch rushed students indoors when it began to thunder, grinning broadly all the while and asking, "What do you expect? We called up Zeus!" (The rain proved only a mild distraction. When the danger passed and RSSAA games teacher Linda Teaman asked the 77 athletes whether they wanted to continue, she received deafening cheers in response!)

Those cheers were just as enthusiastic at the award ceremony that concluded the day. In keeping with Greek tradition, judges for each event recognized the athlete who demonstrated the greatest skill *and* the one who best demonstrated the Greek ideal of "grace and beauty" (i.e., "good form"). Each time the honors were awarded for an event, all wreath winners demonstrated the event again to show the entire assembly the best skill and form. The students had been divided into five city-states for the sake of the competition (Athens, Sparta, Corinth, Mycenae, and Thebes), a mix of students from all of the participating schools on each team. With two types of awards given in each event, for each city-state, and some ties, more than 50 willow wreaths were awarded.

But willow wreath or no willow wreath, every student earned a measure of pride this day. At the opening ceremony the students had asked the thunder god:

*"Oh Zeus, May All These City-States
Win With Honor, and Lose With Grace."*

I think he was there. And he was surely smiling.



Above: A hug of consolation from Mom helps this athlete recover from an intensely visceral Greek wrestling match.

Left: RSSAA's Simon Suboski's effort in the long jump landed him far beyond the marks of other jumpers.



ADMINISTRATOR LINDA POPOVIC ACCEPTS POSITION IN NEW YORK

Linda Popovic, a dedicated RSSAA parent and friend who served as our K-12 Administrator from 2003 to 2005, announced her resignation at the end of the school year. Linda will be moving later this summer to Saratoga Springs in upstate New York, where she has accepted a position as Enrollment Director at the Waldorf School of Saratoga Springs. She and her husband Igor and their children Alex (grade nine) and Ada (grade six) will be greatly missed.

Linda was an active volunteer at the School from the time her family moved to Ann Arbor in 2000. In January of 2001, she joined the staff as project coordinator for development of the Pontiac Trail site. During the 2003-2004 school year, after accepting the full-time position of K-12 Administrator, Linda led the development of the School's Strategic Plan, working closely with the board, faculty, staff, and parents to gather and synthesize a collective vision for the School's future growth.

Her hard work during the School's development of the permanent high school campus will always be remembered with gratitude. She also earned appreciation for her tireless attention to the "big picture," which meant attending scores of meetings, often in the evenings.

"Linda cared very deeply for the Rudolf Steiner School of Ann Arbor, as witnessed by her extraordinary efforts throughout her relationship with us," Board President Howard White said. "We will miss her deeply, and wish her well in her next position in New York."

"I am pleased to be moving into a job which will be more suitable for my family life, but I certainly feel that the Rudolf Steiner School is in a good position," Linda said. "This is a change, but change is growth, and there will be plenty of room for fresh ideas as we celebrate the School's 25th Anniversary in the upcoming year. It is sure to be an exciting time, and I wish everyone the best."

STEINER TIMES TEAM

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and the Class of 2007!
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The Steiner Times is a quarterly publication that is written, edited, and photographed by parents at the Rudolf Steiner School of Ann Arbor.

"Being personally acquainted with a number of Waldorf students, I can say that they come closer to realizing their own potential than practically anyone I know."

*Joseph Weizenbaum, Ph.D., Professor,
 Massachusetts Institute of Technology
 Author, Computer Power and Human Reason*

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Special thanks to Michael Lee of Opus Mime for entertaining us as Auctioneer, and to parent Barbara O'Bryan, a performance artist who graced our event as The Enchanted Statue.

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Older students of the Steiner School know something about a summer bike camp that exists near Sleeping Bear Dunes in the north of lower Michigan. Many have had a hand in helping to grow the program. And a core group has helped to define the camp even more, because they have attended for all four years! Why would anybody want to do this? Why would anybody want to stay outside all day, riding a bike up and down huge hills, and then have to sit around a campfire with (ugh) toasted marshmallows at night before going to sleep in a tent in the piney woods?

Mostly because it is fun. But that's not all. It's because Moonshadow Bike Camp offers a remarkable array of opportunities to take on challenge. For some campers it's the challenge of being away from home for a week. For others, it's giving up noise and bright lights for quiet and Milky Way nights. For a few, it's helping to prepare hot food for all the other campers or to wash all the pots and pans following the completion of the meal. For another few it's to stay organized as a camper and to know how to dress for the changes of weather. For everyone, it's riding a bike with the efficiency to go up the steepest hill without becoming tired out, and the care to race down the back side in order to start the process all over again.

Offering a healthy combination of challenge and fun is what I had in mind when I contacted Rob Bollenberg and Jeanne Stratham near Empire, Michigan about the possibility of using their small farm as a site for a bike camp for children. Rob and Jeanne, knowledgeable about Waldorf education and interested in the way children best learn, quickly agreed to offer their property as a safe and beautiful setting for this endeavor. They also suggested various bike routes that would best help the children to grow and succeed. Together we designed a camp that honors the natural beauty of the land while subtly making it convenient to have a fully equipped kitchen and dining room. The campers sleep in tents in the hushed quiet of the woods away from any light. But there is electricity in the kitchen and enough convenience to respond to the demands



Bike Camp offers a remarkable array of opportunities to take on challenge. Students can even discover the thrill of jumping off sand dunes into Lake Michigan after a long ride!

MOONSHADOW BIKE CAMP CELEBRATES ITS FIFTH YEAR

by Ron Zang

of hygiene and safety. And each year, mostly to satisfy Rob's need to stay busy, we take up a work project to further improve the camp. This year's project involves constructing a new changing room with showers. Neither of us would think to exclude solar power as a heat source for the water, but our backup for cloudy days will be an on-demand hot water tank fueled by propane. You never know.

Another reason children want to come to Moonshadow Bike Camp is that the location can only be described as remarkable. It is in one of the most beautiful areas of the state, with opportunities to bike the most scenic roads and lanes and to swim away from the hustle and bustle of summer tourists. Picture postcard moments are a daily occurrence, and total immersion in nature is the routine. Of course it's inevitable that we climb Sleeping Bear Dunes, and sample the local ice cream shop, and stop in at Cherry Republic for free cherry samples of things sweet and flavorful. But at night when it's dark, we have the campfire and shooting stars, and the still quiet of the night.

Students must complete fifth grade or be that age before qualifying for the camp. This makes it possible to take on the demands of the camp and to have the best possible experience. The outcome is that everyone succeeds. The camp is not limited to Waldorf children; last year we had a camper from Taiwan join us, and more children are enrolling from other schools. Dates for this year's camps: July 10-16 for Intermediate Girls, July 17-23 for Intermediate Boys, July 31-August 6 for Advanced Girls, and August 7-13 for Advanced Boys. If you want to see pictures and find out even more about Moonshadow Bike Camp, log on to the RSSAA.ORG website and key in Moonshadow Summer Bike Camp. Be sure to tell friends and neighbors. I am grateful to the school for supporting this aspect of our summer program as well as immensely appreciative of the setting for Moonshadow Bike Camp.

Ron Zang, M.Ed., teaches woodworking, mathematics, and ultimate frisbee at RSSAA. He is also a father of three and a member of the Board of Trustees.

THE ROLE OF VERSE IN THE WALDORF CLASSROOM

by *Lindsay Passmore*

Ristine Goldynia, a specialist in Speech and Language Pathology who works for the Washtenaw Intermediate School District, had a life-changing experience when she observed classes at the Rudolf Steiner School of Ann Arbor before becoming a consultant here last fall.

“I was amazed at the way language is used in this school,” she recalled. “There was a poetic flow and movement that just invited the students *right in*.” The School’s approach had such an effect, Ms. Goldynia said, that she felt Waldorf education calling out to her in a way she had never experienced before.

This introduction to Waldorf pedagogy came at a time when Ms. Goldynia was looking for some additional tools to bring to her private speech practice. Sensing that she had found what she was seeking, she immediately started coursework at the Waldorf Institute of the Great Lakes. She also signed up for a summer course in New York that is part of a four-year training program in Curative Speech (a Waldorf language specialization which itself has been the subject of entire articles).

Though this response may have been unexpected, it is similar to what parents often feel upon first visiting a Waldorf classroom. It also relates to the gratitude many alumni have for their Waldorf education—some report that they still recite their morning verse into adulthood!

It is not just verses that make up the rich language environment in Waldorf schools. The teachers’ use of the oral storytelling tradition, the literature that is read aloud in class, the annual plays presented by each of the grades, culminating with Shakespeare in twelfth grade, all combine to fill the children’s minds and hearts with beautiful language. But it is the use of choral-verse recitation that is most unique to Waldorf classrooms.

Here is a verse that is typically recited by children in grades one through four to begin the school day:

“The sun with loving light
Makes bright for me each day.
The soul with spirit power
Gives strength unto my limbs.
In sunlight shining clear,
I reverence, O God,

The strength of humankind
Which Thou, so graciously,
Hast planted in my soul,
That I with all my might
May love to work and learn.
From Thee come light and strength,
To Thee rise love and thanks.”

This kindergarten verse, a favorite of RSSAA Bluebirds teacher Sarah Vandermeulen, is an example of the verses given to the younger children:

“The earth is firm beneath my feet
The sun shines bright above
And here I stand so straight and strong
All things to know and love.”

In Waldorf elementary classrooms, the children learn verses not by reading them from a sheet of paper, but by listening and joining in

once they are able. Margot Amrine, a longtime RSSAA faculty member who teaches Language Arts Methods at the Waldorf Institute of the Great Lakes, believes that the children live more fully into the words when they speak by memory in this way. In addition, the memory training serves the children well in their academic work, and gives them the gift of beautiful poetry committed to memory, which can last a lifetime.

There are verses for beginning the day, verses for ending the day, verses for main lesson, lunchtime, and snack time. Here is one of

A scene from this year's senior play, Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream. Seniors end the twelfth grade with an all day, three-week block of Shakespeare.



many beloved mealtime verses:

The silver rain, the shining sun,
The fields where scarlet poppies run,
and all the ripples of the wheat
are in the bread that I do eat.
So when I sit at every meal,
and say a grace, I always feel
that I am eating rain, and sun,
and fields where scarlet poppies run.

Students also recite verses in both Spanish and German, beginning in first grade. This helps to imprint the language patterns in their minds as they perfect their pronunciation. Many verses, such as the ones above, are filled with reverence and gratitude. But there are also silly alliterative rhymes that invite students to experience the fun of playing with sounds.

Capture of a Butterfly

The butterfly with wings
of golden fire,
That trips o'er air with gaiety
and glee,
The flowers by its dancing grace
inspired,
Hold up their heads to it
beseechingly:
The dainty wings that beat so merrily
Like kisses breathed upon a cheek
is felt,
So fragile are the wings that evenly
Beat silently through air not felt.

A sudden little trickster child
that knelt
On earth with net a poised and made
to strike,
A closure round the creature does he
melt,
To take the little sprite
against its like.

For selfish pleasure only eyes enjoy,
To be coddled like a lifeless toy.
Taken home a jar enclosed, a jail,
Frantic wings press against it cold
and pale
Set on white and dirty desktop papers
'Side a plate of artichokes and
capers,
'Spected by the frank and piercing
eyeballs,
Touched and prods a clammy hand so
casual.
Suddenly the eye is frozen fearful
Click! The door rings loud and curtly
cheerful,
Mother's croons release the fading
flower,
Taking flight into the moonlight
bower.

—*Gail Kellum*

Haiku

A new flower blooms,
Ascending from earth to sun.
What is its purpose?

Fresh blossoms on trees
Give life to droning insects
And to singing birds.

—*Andrew Knoll*

6.

The morning was an early one
That dawned so bright and clear.
The smell of frost and leafy boughs
Sent shivers full of cheer.
The leaves that lay about
In neatly piled packs
Were calling me and so I ran
Expect me never back!
I threw a light and airy pile
Up into the sky
On to the next, what joy this was,
Frolicking all the while.
I picked another pile up,
But why so heavy now?
No more a light and airy pack,
But rather coarse and slippery sack.
A possum out my arms jumped forth
And I, with terror ran.
Yes! All the packs I left behind,
The possum glowering too:
Expect me back, I have come back,
I have come back to you!

—*Claire Eddy*

A Sonnet

I'm driven into bland, methodic rhyme,
And meter drives me nearly up the wall
This one will be the first and last drab
time
I plod along at this untimely crawl.
It's so intense, so boring and so long
I can't express what doesn't seem to
fit
Just random things I put, a beer,
a thong
And then I'm stuck and cannot think
a bit.

I hate restraints, it all confuses me
My head is spinning like a tire swing
It's choppy, silly, tone deaf, out of
key
The only part you hear is measuring

I know I have a bee inside my bonnet,
It flew out from the writing of this
sonnet.

—*Asia Hall*

Sonnet

There is something I would like to say,
Have you ever taken art in school?
My favorite subject is to work with clay,
To create my own designs is just so cool.
On Mother's Day I made a picture frame
Customized, my love I did express.
For my Dad, I made a great bi-plane
Though flawed, he loved it none-the-less.
To sculpt the mushy hunk within my
hands, like caterpillar to a butterfly,
From the amorphous junk, a figure
stands,
A prize, a gift, took form before my
eyes.
For when I work the clay, I start to see
Changes happening within me.

—*Aaron Calkins*

The Little Dancer

I saw you dancing, little girl,
I just looked at you and you changed the
way I think.

You let me see how you do feel the
music,

You moved your arms, your legs so
perfectly.

You showed me the world
in a different way.

You were free like a yellow butterfly in
spring.

Like the birds in the air

I wish I could be free like you,

And discover with you all the little
lucky things.

I want to fly with you as a butterfly
over a meadow,

And smell all the different kinds of
flowers.

I saw your dancing, how your dream
came true.

And nothing could bother you.
You were in your own little
beautiful world.

You opened the door to your world for
me,
And with the way you felt, you moved,
With your own world did you change
my world.

—*Sophia Kreth*

TENTH GRADERS MINE FOR GOLD IN POETRY UNIT

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Little Things

I watch the
Thunderstorm
Through the clear glass
Of my bedroom window
Protected from the rain.
—Emily Ljungman

Me and Poetry

Cat and mouse,
Hawk and rabbit,
Predator and Prey.
I close in fast,
It runs still faster,
With all my cunning,
It still eludes,
And finally
I pounce,
And it is mine.
—Eoin O'Bryan

The Lady and Her Prince

I met a cat whose fur was often
soiled
He used to roam the jungle of our
yard
Behaving mice and catching ants he
toiled.
Our other cat, a girl, was quite a
lard,
Getting her to move was always hard.
Her personality was filled with fear,
The first cat always acted as her guard.
You could be sure that he was always
near
Although at times he found her rather
queer.
Once she wandered to a grassy knoll,
It seems her senses weren't so very
clear,
She hurt her paw and fell into a
hole,
Her gallant prince responded to her
need,
And nursed her wounds
with kindest heart indeed.
—Jessie Starr

Poetry

Poetry so fine
So rhythmical
So divine

Poetry so descriptive
So pictorial
So connective

Poetry so sweet
So Romantic
It's hard to beat

Poetry so many
Feelings stuffed
In a few short lines

Poetry so fine
So beautiful
This one so mine.

—Desirae Ott

Ode to Book

Refuge in paper and words
A story line to swallow you
Eat your attention whole
Transported to a new place
A new time, a different life.
Following strangers on a scripted
Journey.

Wondering what will happen next
Forget everything else,
It is life with turning pages
Covers front and back and a spine,
You are in the world of a book.
—Jayme Deeb

Outside Poem #2

Against a tree, in the cool shadows
Sits a boy, a mystery to most,
Shy to the public eye,
There's so much thought beneath his
eyes,

But the words of wisdom he could
share he hides,
Afraid to show the world who he is
inside.

Why impress false friends
Who do not last forever?

Is it because you're afraid of you,
Afraid that you've changed from who
you knew?

Beneath a tree remains a boy,
Quietly writing his thoughts,
A boy, to me, who will always remain
A mystery.
—Anna Emmerling

8.

What is this naked night creeping?
It settles diving deep, dancing
Laughing, this dance blinking eye
The falling of adolescence
This night is oozing innocence.
—Vanessa Lang

Rudolf Steiner, the Austrian educator, scientist, and philosopher who founded Waldorf education, wrote a number of verses for the classroom himself, but Waldorf teachers also make frequent use of poetry and prose by many of the great writers of all time. When RSSAA teacher Claudia Browne wanted to bring something really special to her fourth graders at the end of this school year, she introduced Whitman's "O Give Me the Splendid, Silent Sun." RSSAA teacher Lawrence Mathews gave his eighth graders the following contemporary prose selection this past year because he felt that it met a need they had to make a powerful statement to the world. (It was written by Marianne Williamson and recited by Nelson Mandela at his 1994 inaugural.)

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate,
but that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness that frightens us.

We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant,

gorgeous, talented, and fabulous?

Actually, who are you not to be?

You are a child of God.

Your playing small does not serve the world.

There is nothing enlightened about shrinking

so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We were born to make manifest the glory of God within us.

It is not just in some; it is in everyone.

And as we let our own light shine,

We consciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our fear,

our presence automatically liberates others.

The eighth graders printed the above verse on the title page to the Lower School yearbook (an eighth grade project), a clue to the meaning it holds for them. And many parents report that their children recite school verses at home. But aside from the obvious appreciation students show for their verses, there are other reasons why Waldorf schools place such emphasis on the use of poetic language.

According to Mrs. Amrine, besides the benefit of memory training, rhythmic language has a focusing effect. It helps students and teachers shed their daily concerns and prepare for the work they will undertake in class. Choral recitation also helps to bring the members of the class into sync with one another, through the shared social experience of creating beauty together. Third, she points out that for younger children, the recitation can be a way of learning to distinguish speech sounds (current research shows that individuals with dyslexia not only have trouble reading letters on the page, but also have difficulty hearing certain sounds).

Rudolf Steiner had this to say about the role of verse in the curriculum: "Through [this] intimately artistic way of working, children are enabled to receive what the teaching offers quite differently from how they can when they are simply approached intellectually."

Modern scientific research can also shed light on the subject. Besides the considerable evidence of higher intellectual achievement by children given an arts-rich education, there have been

fascinating discoveries about the relationship between the heart, the brain, and learning. The effect of poetry on our emotional center has long been expressed by the maxim, "Poetry is the universal language of the heart." And now the findings of molecular biologists, neurocardiologists, and psychologists are pointing to the importance of the heart in the learning process.

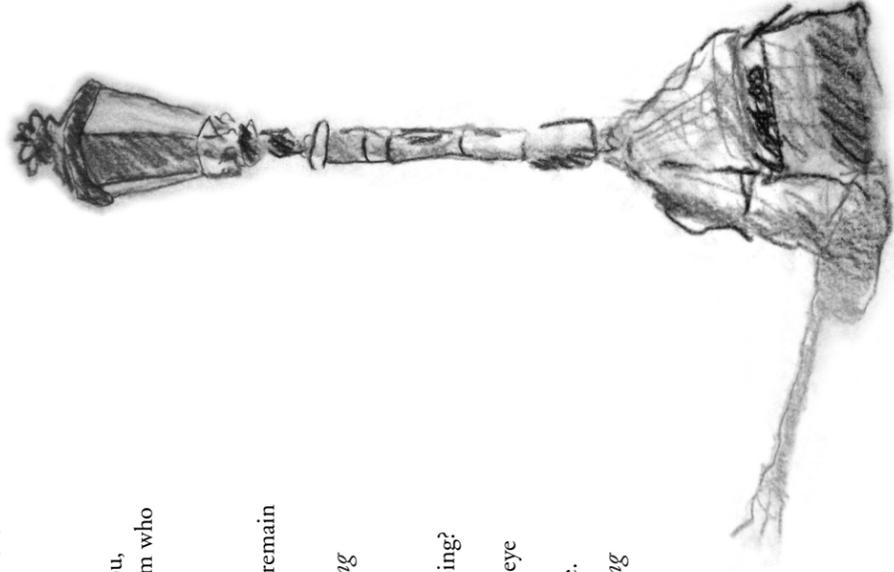
Author Joseph Chilton Pearce, who addresses scholarly meetings at universities worldwide on the subject of education and brain development, has said: "The idea that we can think with our hearts is no longer just a metaphor, but is, in fact, a very real phenomenon. We now know this, because the combined research of two or three fields is proving that the heart is the major center of intelligence in human beings."

Perhaps this is a key to understanding the success of Waldorf education. A February 2005 article in *Wired Magazine* suggests that indeed it may. Daniel Pink, author of *Revenge of the Right Brain*, writes: "Until recently the abilities that led to success in school, work, and business were characteristic of the left hemisphere. They were the sorts of linear, logical, analytical talents measured by SATs and deployed by CPAs. Today these capabilities are still necessary but not sufficient. In a world upended by outsourcing, deluged with data, and choked with choices, the abilities that matter most are now closer in spirit to the specialties of the right hemisphere—artistry, empathy, seeing the big picture, and pursuing the transcendent."

We live in an age that is dominated by technology and competition. Yet more than ever before, families are flocking to Waldorf schools, where teachers engage students in a multi-layered learning experience that consciously nourishes the heart. Could it be that this balance of head and heart fill a critical need in today's educational landscape?

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—Daniel Pink, author of *Revenge of the Right Brain*, as quoted in *Wired Magazine*, February 2005



TENTH GRADERS MINE FOR GOLD IN POETRY UNIT



These poems are a sampling of this spring's writing process with our tenth grade. The tenth graders began the year with a unit titled "The Epic," which concluded with *Beowulf*. Their second unit, or "block" began with the love poetry of Sufi and troubadour poets and spanned to poets writing today. Reading the poems of the masters and working with the mechanics of poetry, the tenth graders wrote in various forms, experimenting with rhyme and meter. The main objective, according to teacher Mary Emery, "is to place ourselves quietly in the poetry wilds, hold out in our hands the humble food we have gathered through our work, and see what untamed imaginations we can attract." This collection includes one poem from each student.

Poetry

Beauty trickles through life
as water through cupped hands
to be toweled off
or gripped in vain and savored
or to flick on passersby
laughing as they blink surprised
and in that flick is poetry
and in that blink more poetry

—Emma Paul

Balance

There is a learning in sorrow.
Its bittersweet touch
can break
the fragile sculpture
of your soul
Leaving you in darkness.
But out of the sad beauty
of these crystal shards
A fire sparks,
And in cave black night,
It makes the sparks burn
all the brighter.
And then
As you piece your soul
together
You make it stronger
Appreciating the misty wonder
with which it's filled.

Cassie says: Do not run
from pain,
For in the running,
you pass the flowers
of happiness
With but a glance
at what you could
hold.

—Cassie Vachon

Poem #1

At the young age of seven
My eyes were in backward,
For nothing I knew of this world
we live in.
As I grew older, my eyes began
turning
Away from the essence of me.
As I traveled away
I forgot where I came from,
Though I craned my neck, and longed
to see
But those days were past
For my eyes had been turning
Away from the essence of me.

I saw this new world
With grimy black air,
Animals dying, Holocausts arising,
Encompassed, encircled, engulfed
was I,
In this world of back-breaking
despair.

But my eyes kept on turning
And beauty I saw,
A wisp of smoke, a pensive look
And I know now that I was just
looking at myself
From inside and out.

—Lance Wagner

The Red Sock

please forgive me,
I overlooked
the red sock.

your shirt is pink now.
it is in the basement.

—Jette Knapp

Outside

Smell of old smell of new
Aged leaves smell of time passed
Fresh grass reeks of today and
beyond.
Air moves in, motions and mixes
Hints of pine stirred with lilac
Shakes me with happiness
Freshens my weary day.

—Ryne Banfield

Here I Sit With Myself

When night is a velvety blanket
Of dark
And sound does the earth not make,
My breath is the only wind I feel,
My tears the only rain,
Thought has become a calm pool
In which I now reflect,
My legs strong roots to grab the
Earth,
My arms pale wings to touch the sky.
Here I am,
Here I sit with myself.
Jayne says: My, what piercing
beauty of existence.

—Jayne Truesdell

Poetry

I learn from it
It teaches me
It shows me a way
A life to
Lead.

—Kaitlin Kirsch

The Studio

Hears pounding
Smiling mouths clamped shut
Biting lower lips and puffing out
cheeks
Sweat beads flying
Music blaring
Floor boards squeaking
Ankles cracking
Joyful feet jumping
Graceful arms flying.

—Eliza Wiener

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JUNIOR WINS HONORS IN WRITING COMPETITIONS

Jenneva Shultz, an RSSAA junior, is one dedicated writer. This year, her talent with the pen earned her recognition in not one, but four writing competitions! Jenneva's creative writing skills have been appreciated by judges before – she has twice won second place in the Ann Arbor District Library (AADL) High School Short Story Contest. This year was special however, because Jenneva was won recognition in several different genres.

She won first place in Albion College's High School Poetry Contest with her poem *My Grandmother's Mirror*. In addition, her essay *Three Trees of Consequence* earned her a spot as finalist in the National High School Creative Essay Contest. Jenneva was also a finalist in this year's AADL High School Short Story contest, and she won third place in this year's Jackson District Library poetry competition for high school students. Congratulations, Jenneva!

My Grandmother's Mirror

by Jenneva Schultz, 11th Grade

I stood in front of my grandmother's mirror
Looking at myself,
My feet planted on the green carpet
that always felt so seductive
and extravagant
under six year old feet.
I remember this room
like the inner sanctum of her majesty,
the rich elegance in the private bath,
the sky light,
the heavy cream of the curtains pouring
without noise
to the floor,
for all the years that I recall
continuing still as I stand
transfixed by a gilded mirror
a curling script of gold that spells in lazy letters
words I still can't read, distracted by myself—
looking young
and not quite put together
my socks too long on small feet
my eyes too big in a small face
forever childlike in my grandmother's mirror.

—My Grandmother's Mirror won
first place in the Albion College
High School Poetry Competition.