

Spring 2023

Story Builder Workshop Series

Mini Anthology



D102 La Grange

www.sarahhammond.org

Table of Contents

Foreword	3
GEORGRAPHY MONSTER by Margaret Paulson (Grade 4)	4
WHEN LUCA COULD FLY by Allie Maresso (Grade 6)	10
PEACE by Atlas Schilling (Grade 5)	17

Foreword

It was a pleasure to work with these three talented students in my five session Story Builder Workshop Series in Spring 2023 . Each week, we uncovered memorable and inventive story ideas, read excerpts from various novels, and experimented with story craft using various exercises. The submissions in this mini-anthology are but a few of the wonderful stories I heard during our time together. I was thrilled that each student was inspired and motivated to continue and complete these pieces for this anthology after our class.

The idea for the GEOGRAPHY MONSTER was born in our Monsters Session, based on a storytelling exercise designed by John Schultz as part of his Story Workshop® method. Margaret's voice is distinctive and strong, her character's geography dilemma heightened by the presence of menacing and mysterious tentacles that appear at unexpected moments. An original and well-imagined story.

I loved the way Allie developed WHEN LUCA COULD FLY. She imagined a thought-provoking and sophisticated backstory that is slowly revealed in her piece. I appreciate her original and diverse protagonist, too.

Atlas also discovered the story, PEACE, during our Monsters Session. This is an inventive and creative idea with an unusual protagonist. I found Atlas's use of multiple points of view to build suspense to be very effective.

Congratulations to these young storytellers!



Sarah Hammond

The Geography Monster



By Margaret Paulson (Grade 4)

Mr. Box stood up and clapped his hands together. “Okay! Students, I have an important announcement to make.”

My eyes brightened. Important announcements are always tests. They just always are.

“We are going to have a test.” Mr. Box said.

I told you. He thinks that everybody will forget that important announcements are tests, but he’s not fooling anybody. Well, maybe he is, but not me. I raised my hand high in the air.

“Yes, Lily?” Mr. Box said.

I had been called on. And, yes, my name is Lily. If you ever write it down, spell it correctly. Too many people have spelled it “Lilly” with two L’s. “What kind of test? I mean, for which subject?” I asked.

Mr. Box cleared his throat. That’s the kind of thing teachers do. “It will be a Geography test,” he said.

I gulped. Geography is not my best subject. “Geography?” I asked, although I knew what the answer would be.

“Geography.” Mr. Box confirmed.

I nodded my head very slowly. That’s what I do when I’m not really listening. I’m sort of half-listening, but I can still answer. It means I’m thinking, usually. “Uh, can I go get a drink of water?” I asked, but really, I was just going to wait in the hallway until the dismissal bell rang.

“Yes, you can.” Mr. Box said.

With that, I ran outside and breathed in the hallway air. It’s actually the same kind of air as classroom air, but I like hallway air better. It’s the scent that reminds you you’re probably going to get a long break from learning.

I tapped my foot and looked at the walls. Posters about everything were on the walls. Art, Science, Math, Geography, Reading... Geography. Usually I don’t like studying, but I’m not taking any chances. Because if I did, there’s a chance I’d never make it to 3rd grade. I looked around to see if anyone was near me. Nobody was in sight. I guess I should say “all clear”. So, yeah. All clear. I slowly reached for my notebook which was in my pocket. I

didn't have a pen or anything to write with, so I have to improvise. I didn't have much to work with. An eraser, half a pencil, a rubber band, and a crayon sharpener.

But it’s better than nothing. So I used the rubber band to attach the eraser to the pencil, and I tried sharpening the front of the pencil using the crayon sharpener, but I guess that old thing can only sharpen crayons, so I was out of luck. Plus, I don’t even like or use crayons. The last time I used a crayon was when I was in Kindergarten and I had to color the sun. I’m pretty sure the crayon was yellow. No, actually, it was Banana Yellow. I remember sounding the word “banana” out.

I started writing down every single thing I saw, and soon I was seeing more than my hands could write. And I also wasn’t even looking at my notebook, so all the letters were slanted, like Italics. Italics are those slanted letters that you use when you’re typing. They look like this: *This is what they look like*. See? They’re slanted.

The bell finally rang, and I had to go back inside.

"What took you so long?" Maya, one of my classmates, asked.

"Uh, there was a long line." I said quickly.

"There was not!" someone said. "I was just down there. There wasn’t a line at all. I saw you in the hallway, staring at the walls."

I laughed nervously. Hopefully you know what that sounds like.

Mr. Box raised his eyebrows and shook his head.

I ran outside of the classroom and went down the stairs.

"Backpack!" someone yelled.

I gasped and ran back up the stairs, and slid across the floor. I couldn’t stop myself, so I landed on my face.

A boy named Henry who’s about five years older than me walked up. "Uh, what are you doing?" he said.

I quickly sat up. "Nothing." I said firmly.

He walked away and I went to my backpack. But something wasn’t right. A blue and green tentacle was grabbing my backpack. It started pulling, but I shouted, "No!" The tentacle pointed at me and then went under the floor.



This had happened once before. Not really, but in my dreams. Actually, more like nightmares.

So I know that didn't actually happen. It's just my mind trying to make me believe that nightmares become reality.

I knew that by now every single kid would have gone home already. So I ran back down the stairs. Not as fast as I usually do, but still fairly fast. Then I pushed open the heavy red doors and ran towards the sidewalk.

I stomped hard and kicked a stick. I'm not happy. I'm the total opposite of happy. That's unhappy. I'm feeling very unhappy. Geography ruins my day. I spotted a yellow piece of paper in a puddle. Usually, I would never pick trash up off the ground, but when I'm mad, I do things without thinking, and that leads to trouble. A lot of the words were faded, but I could still read a lot of them.

It was some kind of flier telling you to sign up for the Geography Club.

"Ha!" I said. "Good luck getting me to sign up for *that*." Did you realize I used Italics? Remember, they're the slanted letters.

But then I realized that signing up for a Geography Club is exactly what I needed. I never sign up for any school clubs, but I'm not staying back in 2nd grade for another year, so I kind of have no choice.

Tomorrow morning, I'll definitely sign up.

The Next Day

I walked into my classroom and went to the back of the room, where Mr. Box was eating some yogurt and a granola bar.

"Can I go to the—" I said, but stopped when Mr. Box started chewing. I tried to talk again, but he kept chewing and it was really annoying me.

"Go on," Mr. Box said, his mouth full of granola and yogurt. I saw a grain of granola fall out of his mouth, but he was acting like he didn't notice it was there, so I decided to just ask one of the other teachers.

I have another teacher in my classroom. Her name is Mrs. Robert. She's not the real teacher, but she helps Mr. Box out when he has too many tests to grade, or when Mr. Box is at a meeting.

I walked up to her. "Hey, can I go to the principal's office to sign up for a school club?" I asked her.

"Sure, but be back in time for math. We don't want you missing the math quiz," Mrs. Robert said.

"Yeah, I bet that math quiz is SUPER important." I said.

"You better think it is," Mrs. Robert said. "Because if you don't, I'm not sure that you'll get good grades for our upcoming tests."

"Uh-huh. Yeah. Yeah, I'll get good grades. I consider a C+ a great grade. So yes, I will get a good grade. Especially on the Geography test. I'll probably get an F. And that's amazing," I said.

Mrs. Robert rolled her eyes. "If you consider a C+ a good grade, then yes, I bet you'll get good grades, too."

I nodded my head and left the classroom. I went downstairs, and into the office. I held
up

the flier I found for the Geography Club.

"Hello!" I said cheerfully. "Can I sign up for the Geography Club?"

The principal's eyes widened. "They sent the flier to you? Do you really need help with Geography? That flier was only sent to people who haven't been getting good grades in Geography."

I shot her a confused look. I had made a big mistake.

"Yes, uh, the flier was sent to me last week. I got it a little late, because they had a hard time deciding if I needed it. But they decided it wouldn't hurt to let me have a little extra practice. So, yes, I'll sign up," I said.

"Alright then," the principal said. "I think there was one spot left, so you're pretty lucky. By the way, did your parents make you sign up?"

"No," I said. "I decided I needed a little extra practice. For all I know, my parents don't even know I'm signing up for this club."

"Oh, then after I sign you up, I'll need to contact them straight away. Anyway, let me go get the paperwork, and I'll sign you up," she said.

As the principal walked away, I slowly walked towards her desk. Just like yesterday, a blue and green tentacle was reaching for a pen. It shook the pen, and ink splattered all over the paperwork, which was on the desk.

It flapped its tentacle around carelessly and reached around until it found the tissues. It shook the box, hoping one would fall out, but it finally had to pull one out of the box itself, which took about five minutes.

It wiped the ink splatters just in time, for they were almost dry. It smeared, but the monster didn't seem to care, because it dropped the tissue and picked up the pen again. It wrote something in messy letters, definitely not a match to the other handwritings from the principal and other teachers.

The tentacle slithered away just as the principal walked into the room. "There it is!" she exclaimed.

She walked towards it and picked it up. "Oh no," she said. "There's no spots left. Oh well, we can fit one more student in. Wait, what's this? Aqua? There's nobody in this school named Aqua."

The principal crossed the name "Aqua" and wrote in a new name. My name.

Today is the day for the Geography Club. I walked over to the room. Room 103 to be exact. I walked inside and I saw a teacher smiling.

"Hello!" she said. "I'm Mrs. Gavin. You're the only person here today, but that's not stopping us, is it?"

I shook my head slowly.

"Now," Mrs. Gavin said. We are going to review the seven continents. Say them with me."

I couldn't believe it. This is too easy. "Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Antarctica..." I paused.

"Why did you stop?" Mrs. Gavin asked.

"I don't know the rest. Italy and Islands?" I said.

"Italy is a country, and an island is... Well, an island. Not continents, for sure." Mrs. Gavin said.

"Oh!" I said. "Europe and Australia!"

"Well done. Now write those down so you remember. Tell me if you need help spelling anything," Mrs. Gavin said cheerfully.

I don't need help spelling words. I never do.

Asia, Afrika, North Amairica, South Amairica, Antartica, Yerup, Ostrailia.

Mrs. Gavin stared at my paper. "You need some help?" she asked. "You spelled some things incorrectly."

"No, I didn't. You spell words by sounding them out letter by letter. And that's what I did." I said.

"Well, yes, but still." Mrs. Gavin said.

Mrs. Gavin erased every word except Asia. "Now, try again."

I tried again, and I spelled everything correctly except for Australia. Only adults know that it starts with "Au" and not "O".

"I'm leaving now," I said.

"No, it's not time to," Mrs. Gavin said.

I ignored her and ran out of the room. Mrs. Gavin shook her head. She called out for me, like I was a dog or something, but I didn't answer or come back. She shouldn't have helped me. But it's her loss.

If she loses her job, she better not come running to me begging for help and asking for money. I'm not saying I want her to lose her job, I'm just saying "if".

I ran back to the classroom. Luckily, the bell had already rang, so I didn't have to wait outside while all the kids stared at me.

Geography is right after recess or any clubs. Geography tests are during Geography. Math tests are during Math. Reading tests are during Reading. It just makes sense

Mr. Box grabbed a thick pile of stapled packets and started passing them out. He said that as soon as we got our test, we could start working.

The first problem was: What are the 7 continents?

I knew the answer to that, so I wrote the answer down as quickly as I could.

Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Antarctica, Europe, Australia.

The next question was even easier. What grows in South America?

Jungle.

I quickly erased it, because I realized it wasn't right.

Rainforest.

This is the kind of test with only three questions. But the three questions are three main things we've been learning about. I'm sure we'll take another test soon with twenty questions. The last question was: What is another name for Australia?

Ocean. Actually, no, Oceania. Sorry, Mr. Box. I just used all of my eraser up.

I know I passed. How couldn't I have?

I dropped my paper into the basket labeled "Turn-In Bin". I watched Mr. Box grade the papers. When he was done, he passed them out again. But something wasn't right.

I saw that same tentacle slithering away from Mr. Box's desk.

I don't really believe in monsters, though, so I don't think I should worry. I lifted up my paper, but every single question was marked wrong. There was a letter F at the top. Mr. Box reached for the next paper. He gasped. He ran back to my desk and swapped the papers out.



Mr. Box reached for the next paper. He gasped. He ran back to my desk and swapped the papers out.

I peeked at the new one that he gave me. There was a letter A at the top. But there was still a problem. The Geography Club is supposed to be every day for 2 weeks. I thought about it for a little, but then I decided that I would just skip the classes.

None of the other kids who joined the club showed up today, so why should I next time? There's no point in having a Geography Club if there is just one kid there. So, no. I'm not going.

If Mrs. Gavin gets fired, who cares? What good is she anyway? She helped me with something I needed to just think about for a little bit.

Yeah, I don't know if she'll get fired. But I do know one thing. It's that monsters aren't real, and I know it.

~~~





# When Luca Could Fly

by Allie Maresso (Grade 6)

## Chapter One

The church ceremony was quiet as the cello and viola rang out in perfect harmony. The stain-glass windows beamed with sunlight casting rainbow patterns dancing across the wooden pews and the dull pink carpeted floor. Today was Easter Day, and everything was perfectly peaceful. As the mass dismissed, a dozen people exactly pushed through the exit into the spring sunshine. The 11:00 mass was now over. A family of three, two twin adult women were pushing their daughter in a wheelchair pass by. The daughter's name was printed on the backseat. LUCA. The family climbed into a green punch buggy and sped off down the road.

When Luca was born, she could walk.

At least, she remembered walking. Her Aunt Julie and mom didn't go into any detail about her birth too often. Maybe it was before birth. She remembered her aunt decorating her oceanside-themed bedroom. Her mom staying up till midnight searching for modern baby names. Her life before. A different life. A life, where she was part of another world. A mystic abyss. And reader, Luca could fly in that world. There was a time when Luca could fly.

Yes, reader, there was.

As the car sped off to the Tuckertown Air Show, Luca could smell the fresh bread loaves from the bakery, and she caught a scent of tuna coming from the fisheries harbor. Since Luca always took a little bit of time to load into the car, the air show had begun when the Saeback family arrived. As the family sat down and watched the kites and planes shoot colorful smoke and dance in the sky, Luca sighed in admiration. She looked dreamily up at the sky, like she was searching for something.

2 DAYS LATER

BRIIIIINNNG! The school bell shook Luca out of her daydreams. It had been two days since the airshow, and now it was time for school. Luca liked the summer school classes she took every July. You got to play a lot, and work outside. Regular school was not like that. Ms. Freeman rarely let the students read or do math outside.





Lyric J. Hanson Elementary School was always busy during shifting periods. Luca bent down into her lower locker and swapped a math binder for a science notebook. Slowly, she rolled down the hallway to room B-207. The tall science teacher, Mrs. Briggs, smiled as Luca entered the room. Luca waved, but deep inside, she did not want to be in science class. She wanted to be at the airshow again, watching the planes and kites swoop and twirl and sway. She wanted to do that someday. So, Luca dozed off (daydreaming, rather) as Mrs. Briggs began ranting about the lungs and carbon dioxide. As Mrs. Briggs started talking about birds flying, breathing, and pumping their heart at the same time, she felt, too, she was floating like one of those birds Mrs. Briggs was describing.

So, when Luca found herself on the table daydreaming, she was a little bit stunned. The whole class looked backwards at Luca as she stirred slightly. Then, the class erupted into peals of laughter, like they were watching a comedy show, not Luca. And the weirdest thing was that Luca's wheelchair was a few feet away from her body. Mrs. Briggs frowned as she chaired Luca back to her wheelchair.

"You're in for it next time, Saeback." She growled.

Luca gulped, then started taking notes as Mrs. Briggs continued teaching.

## Chapter Two

"Hey, Aunt Julie, why do people say that gliding squirrels can fly?" Luca asked as she rolled up the porch into the sunny-colored kitchen.

Aunt Julie was removing blueberry muffins from her muffin tin. Luca snatched the ripest one immediately. Aunt Julie laughed. "Just like your mother."

She sighed, half-giggling. Mysteriously, Luca also had somehow ended up on top of the exercise ball during her gym period in school. Coach Levy, the gym teacher, was super proud of her. But Luca had never been able to do that before, let alone even sit on the ball for a second. Aunt Julie paused to water the cactus, then turned to Luca.

"Oh, I think it's because they look like they can fly, sweetie. You can look up some more facts on my laptop," she answered.

Just then, the telephone, mounted next to the cactus plant on the wall rang. Aunt Julie answered it. "Hi. Hmm, okay. I'm sure it won't happen again, Hilda."

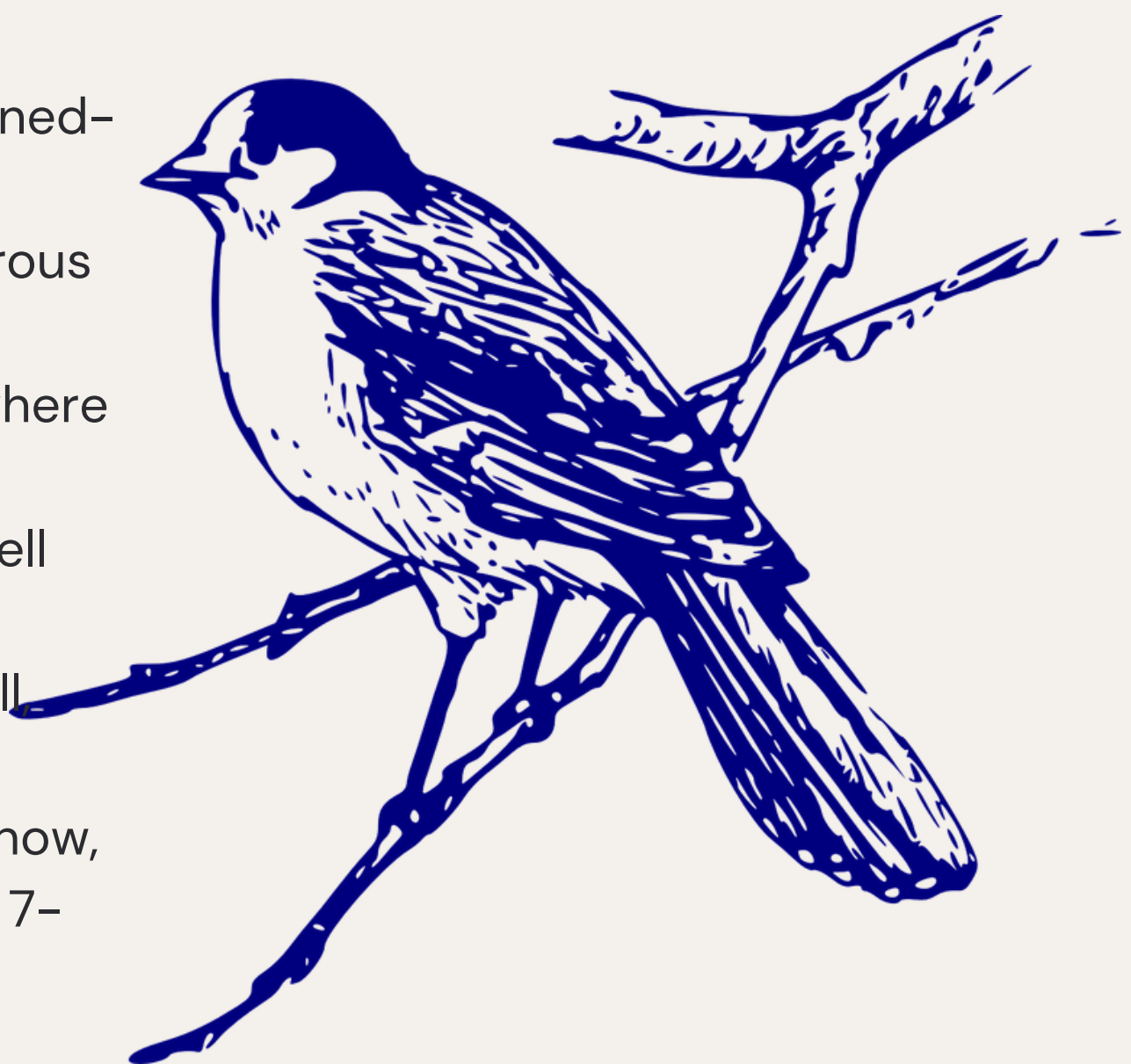
Hilda! That was Mrs. Briggs's first name! Oh, why, oh, why did Aunt Julie ever answer that call! Luca sighed softly. Her science teacher probably really dislike her if she'd had to call home! She knew her mom might mention it later but, not during Hang Glider Extreme— a daring show where people had to do dangerous challenges. Luca was really excited for Hang Glider Extreme, so she didn't notice when a bunch of glowing blue orbs started tapping on her window.

### 2 HOURS LATER

The clock now read 7:29. Hang Glider Extreme started at 7:30. As Aunt Julie flicked to Channel 56, Luca's mom entered the house. Every light was off because it conserved energy and made TV time feel like a movie theater, especially during the night. Luca's mom came in carrying garlic rolls, a pizza box, and cinnamon churros. Aunt Julie grabbed



two bowls of popcorn—one buttered and another salted. Aunt Julie then grabbed the switch and turned on Hang Glider Extreme— a show where different people from different countries did a lot of dangerous challenges. The show originally had been a hang-gliding tutorial, when Aunt Julie and Luca’s mom were kids. Now it was a challenge show. Today, the contestants were Moss Hurling, a Peruvian poet, Nell Anderson, a Kenyan biologist and doctor, and Alex Thompson, a flute player from Hawaii. As Moss, Nell, and Alex began hurling themselves off cliffs and jumped off bridges, Luca got so absorbed in the show, she forgot to take a pizza slice and have a glass of 7-up.



## Chapter 3

### 1 HOUR LATER

“Luca, sweetie, we need to get off the cabinet, okay?” Luca groggily rubbed her eyes. She felt a smooth, wooden surface. As her vision cleared, she saw she was on the cabinet, and her family was below.

Aunt Julie hoisted Luca off and said, “That’s weird,” to Luca’s mom.

Luca looked at the cactus as they passed the kitchen. A dozen blue, green, and yellow orbs— or glowing balls were dancing around the spiky plant. A single pink orb and two purple orbs made some sort of humming noise. Really weird, thought Luca.

“You missed the episode finale.” Luca’s mom commented. “Anyways, it’s 8:30. Time for bed.”

Luca rolled down the hallway and shut her bedroom door. Aunt Julie and her tucked her in, then shut off the lights. Luca turned over and went to sleep. That night, she dreamed about blue jays. Except, she was a blue jay. She flew with the birds, swooping within the clouds, and bouncing up and down with her fellow bird friends.

### THE NEXT MORNING

When she woke up, Luca was flying. With the birds. She was sitting in the oak tree, on the highest branch. Except this time, she wasn’t a blue jay. She was plain old Luca in pajamas. Why am I up this high? She wondered. And where, oh, where is my wheelchair? The branches swayed and swished overlooking her backyard. She carefully took in a breath of the fresh morning air, then pushed off the tree with her bird friends. She swooped and swayed over the neighborhood and tapped on the glass of Mr. Donnelly’s bathroom window. And when she saw those glowing pastel-colored orbs again, she chased after them. As Luca tried to grab an orb, passed through the spring green one and was immediately transported into a forest with willow branches and beautiful violets and other wildflowers everywhere.

“Hello,” said all four green orbs. Except now, the orbs weren’t orbs or colored balls of any



sort. The four green orbs now looked like green-skinned fairies. The single purple orb and the two pink orbs were also now fairies.

"Welcome," all the fairies said in unison.

"I am Callista, the head fairy," said the purple fairy. "This is Blossom and Charla, the fire fairies." Callista introduced the two pink fairies.

The four green fairies introduced themselves as the earth fairies. Their names were Fawn, Fern, Willow, and Daisy. Then the blue fairies, the water fairies, introduced themselves as Aqua, Coral, and Pearl. The five yellow fairies, or the air fairies, were named Aria, Kiki, Hope, Patience, and Skye.

Now, all the fairies were leading Luca through the willow-covered forest. Surprisingly, Luca's wheelchair seemed to hover, but then it stopped, so she had to move the wheels to make it go.

"This is the Before," Skye said. "It is where everyone goes before birth," she said.

As Luca looked around, she saw lots of glowing, wispy figures that looked kind of like humans. Some were blue or yellow, others green and pink. A few were purple. Luca suddenly noticed that she had a purple glow around her body. Callista seemed to notice her confusion.

"Everyone has an aura, or a soul." She explained. "Each fairy element has a 'tribe,' or a group of unborn souls." Callista paused to pick a flower, then turned back to Luca. "When one soul is born into the earth, a new one comes from a former life. It's a recreating cycle." Callista added. "Anyone from the purple tribe-like you, my dear, has the power to fly and connect with flying animals. Some can even turn into a pelican or a small bird. Something like that."

Then, Blossom pitched in to the two's conversation. "And if you're from the pink tribe, for example, then you can probably, like, survive a wildfire or like, get, super close to fires. Once every decade or so, someone can become fire. It's kind of rare."

Luca paused to look around at different colored souls playing, dancing, and piping woodland tunes on reed pipes. Everything seemed so peaceful here. And now, she kind of remembered it. Like, maybe bits of this place. She remembered the reed pipes for sure. "Wait, you said people are from former lives here, right, Callista?" she asked.

Callista nodded. "Except, you don't remember your former life, dear," she said. Callista continued talking about how air souls could hover or become air, and how water souls were able to turn into a source of water and could breathe underwater.

But by now Luca wasn't really listening anymore. She found it too tiring to even push her wheels anymore. So, she found herself blasting backwards against a powerful wind and ended up in her bed. She found herself rolling about in the bed and saw Aunt Julie leaning over her.

"Luca, it's 7:00. We're going into the beach," she announced softly.

Luca lived really near the beach, which had always pleased her. And maybe now that she had been to the Before, she could see auras on everybody now. "Water." She said. Aunt Julie continued to push her down the sandy path to the beach, which had tall grasses lining the sandy hills.

"What?" Aunt Julie asked.

"Nothing." Luca stuttered. "I just think the water is so beautiful, you know..." Luca said trailing off.





Aunt Julie looked at her suspiciously but continued to push Luca.

The reason Luca said water was because she could see the water aura around Aunt Julie. Finally, the two arrived at the beach. A few younger girls were tossing around a mega-sized volleyball, and a few older girls were beachcombing. Aunt Julie hoisted Luca out of her wheelchair and set her down on the edge of the beach. The tiny waves splashed Luca's swimsuit, and she giggled. Luca then saw some older boys surfing. She had always wanted to try surfing, except she couldn't. But as Luca imagined herself surfing, she saw everything fading away on the beach—like a watercolor painting dissolving.

She lifted out of her wheelchair, and she floated higher and higher until a strong breeze caught, carrying over the ocean. She began to glide along the with the ocean's current, until she dipped down to dive under water. It was fresh, to take a breath of the ocean sea salt, then plunge into the rolling waves. But slowly, like last time, Luca found herself dissolving from the ocean. She watched as her adventure disappeared like a backspace button deleting words. She found all the people on the beach reappearing. When Luca opened her eyes, she realized she was back in her chair, and Aunt Julie was staring at Luca.

"Honey...." She spoke carefully, as if she had a limited amount of words to speak. "That... was...interesting." Aunt Julie spoke again. "How did you get in the ocean? The sky, more accurately?" Aunt Julie questioned.

"Um, well....." Luca began, but Aunt Julie cut her off. "You're an aura-seer, aren't you, Luca?" she asked. There was something about Aunt Julie's voice that made Luca pause before she answered her aunt.

"You're Callista!" she blurted out.

Aunt Julie blushed red and whispered "Comida." Slowly, everyone on the beach froze in mid-action. Aunt Julie snapped her fingers and several auras appeared around the different people on the beach. The volleyball girls all had fire auras, and the beachcombers all had water auras. "Yes, I am the human form of Callista." Aunt Julie added, then snapped her fingers twice. Everyone on the beach vanished into a shimmer of different-colored aura sparkles. "I wasn't born Callista, you see." she admitted. "I was chosen to be the next human form of the Before's leader because my family has either all been aura-seers or a leader.



Then, the spirit of the former Callista, my grandmother, decided to inhabit my soul when I was nine. It was just after my family moved here, so that was a big change, you can imagine," she said, speaking carefully. "Your mother is an aura-seer."

Luca took a deep breath of the oceanside scent, and then asked another question. "What happened to those people on the beach? The beachcombers and volleyball girls?"

Maybe Aunt Julie could see the worry in Luca's eyes, or maybe she couldn't, but whatever it was, Aunt Julie was staring intensely at something.

"They went to reconnect with their element for a little while, dearie," Aunt Julie said strangely, then she turned around very slowly. She was no longer normal Aunt Julie; she was now shimmering purple and had a weird glow in her eyes, which were now a maple-yellow color. She hissed once or twice, and Luca screamed.

Luca rolled a few steps backward from Aunt Julie and whispered "Comida" like the now non-human Aunt Julie had done. All the people on the beach that had disappeared reappeared in blinding flashes of yellow light. They were now moving in slow motion. Luca would have to erase the slowness later, somehow. She pushed off of her wheelchair and burst into full speed. She rocketed towards the sky, over the ocean, but changed her direction to end up at her house.

Aunt Julie did the same and began following Luca, her eyes glowing maple-yellow creepier than ever. Luca pushed behind her, as if she was swimming, and a burst of speed rocketed her halfway across the tiny pueblo, or town. She finally reached her house and banged on the attic window. Her mom looked up from her needlework and screamed when she saw Luca.

"Get inside!" she yelled, and opened the attic window quickly, then padlocked it shut. "I knew this was coming soon." She muttered under her breath.

Then, as they heard the un-human Aunt Julie approaching, Luca's mom threw open the secret tiny furnace closet door (which was a crawl space, kind of) and the two slipped inside. A tiny ventilation hole provided little light. Luca's mom popped open a second trapdoor and dropped down what seemed to be a long hole.

"Follow me, sweetie," she said.

Luca peeked down the hole, and decided to fly down it, just in case, because who knew if it was a hard or soft landing down below? It was a hard landing, so Luca was glad she flew.

"I wish I was from your tribe, not the earth one," Luca's mom muttered to herself once they both had reached the bottom. "I will personally blame Fern and Willow for this mess," said Luca's mom, muttering again.

"Fern and Willow...." Luca said with vague recognition. "The two fairies! Your friends..." "From college." Luca's mom finished. "They are still mischief today. Maybe it's because they don't age, you know." She said. "Anyways, keep moving Luca."

As her mom threw open a vent door, Luca wondered why this was so scary. The two were now in the basement crawl hole, which was super scary. Then, Luca peered down the tunnel leading towards the laundry room in the basement. The two just had to bust open the cardboard cover, and then they would be partially safe.....

Luca's mom locked the vent door, and the two pushed open the cardboard covering. Luca zoomed out of the crawl hole, but got her foot stuck on the cardboard covering.



Then, something started yanking at her ankle, and pulled her back into the crawl hole.

Luca screamed, then everything started to go black, and Luca couldn't see. Then, a snapping noise occurred and Luca plummeted twenty feet downwards into a dark, swirling, black cloud of mist and steam that lead to the great unknown.

~~~


Peace



by Atlas Schilling (Grade 5)

Building: I was sand. Grains of sand. Yes, on a beach. I was giving homes to many crabs. I loved my crabs. They were great. One day, a human lifted me into a truck with my crabs. I protected my crabs at all costs.

A few hours later, we were dumped somewhere. I moved my sandy arms around my crabs. Bear-hugging them. Then, the temperature started to get very hot. It got too hot. I was solidifying slowly, turning into a mutant lava monster. My crabs started to drop dead, one by one.

This is all the human's fault. I can't believe them. I glowed even more red and passed out. I needed revenge. I woke up. I was in the sky. They had turned me into an office building. I could barely move. I tried to, I could move my insides. They sloshed like jelly and I heard screaming from insides. Humans.

I had a plan. I had to be very observant, though. I would find out what makes them happy. Usually a dead loved one. I would morph into that dead one and lead them to death. I soon grew a new room like sticking out a tongue. And my mouth was in the new room. At the end of the day, I saw a man exit and cry at his phone. I got a closer look and saw the man's daughter had died. My plan is going to work.

Person: I exited work and my phone buzzed. My wife called. "Hello?" I asked. I could hear sobbing on the other line from my wife. "What's wrong?" I was getting worried.

"She was j-just crossing the s-street." She said in-between wails. Fear washed over me.

"Who!?" I asked.

"Caroline!" She yelled.

I dropped my phone and it broke. Caroline is my daughter, she just died. I sank to the floor.

Building: The next morning, the human was back. Sad, though. A few hours later, I was ready. When he went to the bathroom, I created a clone of his daughter and knocked on the door.

“Hello?” He asked, flushing the toilet.

“Dad, come out!” I said as his daughter.

Person: Did I believe my ears!? I opened the door, fast.

“Caroline!” I screamed and hugged her. She laughed/ I laughed and cried. “Do you need anything?” I asked. I pulled away from her but my hands stayed on her shoulders. All I saw from her were her beautiful blue eyes and her shivering red hair. That looks like copper in the sun. She smiled, her teeth of shining pearl. “Do you want to play a game?” I asked.

“Yes!” She exclaimed.

“What game?” I asked. “Tag!” Caroline answered, throwing her hands in the air.

But, something was off...

Building: I was looking through the girl’s eyes. Her father had very short hair. For the better, anyways. I started to run around my building. He chased after me. I laughed. I looked back at his blue eyes that look like the sea. They glimmered a bit with tears. And for a second there, I almost felt guilty for what I was going to do to him.

Person: After the work day, I walked home with Caroline. I gave her a piggy back ride all the way home. She laughed and sang. Caroline normally smells of apples and honey. She smelled strongly now, I wondered why. When we got to the front door, I put her down. I opened the door and yelled for my wife, Nicole.

“Nicole!” I yelled, “Nicole, Caroline’s alive!” I heard running down our old, creaky steps. The dull colored carpet moved under her. I saw tears in her green eyes.

“Caroline, say hello to your–” I looked down and noticed she wasn’t there...

Building: Do I have guilt? No. I do not. But the smell of the sewer made me feel guilty for those who had noses. As the sewer was opened by men in bright, bright colored vests. I didn’t think much of it and went to sleep for the rest of the day. The next day, the man came into work again.

Person: I entered the building impatiently. Hoping Caroline would be there, she was. Standing at the doorway. “Caroline!” I yelled. I picked her up and twirled her around. “Dad!” She sang, “Catch me if you can!” Then she darted off to the stairs. I followed her. She ran into a strange room I’d never seen before. The ground seemed to move up and down under me, like breathing. The air got warmer, too.

Building: I had him right by my mouth. It’s time for revenge. I made his daughter move into my mouth. While the man was watching with horror, I made her fall in.

Person: “Why...” I said. Tears rolled down my face as I tried to make sense of it all. Before I knew it, I was tumbling down after her. Razor sharp teeth as big as myself impaled me.

Building: "Ha!" I yelled. I bit down on him, blood stashed all around the room. I quickly closed the door. I cloned the man so no one would suspect anything.

Throughout the next few months, I studied a greedy man. He was money hungry... very. The man had a buzz cut, always wore a suit, and he had a beard. He also wore black glasses. He had a short temper. As I watched over him, he only wanted money. I had a new plan. As he's working in his office, I made money appear on the ground. He slowly got out of his fancy blue cushioned chair and snatched the money. This will work.

Person: More money appeared like snap! I'll be more rich than ever, haha! I quickly grabbed the money and chased the trail. The blue carpet came up sometimes when I picked up the money furiously. Then, the ground started bobbing up and down. Making me fall over. I got up and got more. I opened a door to a room I'd never seen before. The wallpaper was yellow and the carpet was beige. A gaping hole stood in the center. I backed up a bit but noticed the money trail leading into there. I jumped in.

Building: Stupid people! Oh my, so very dumb. He fell into my obvious trap! I chomped down on him and blood flew everywhere, again. Then I quickly closed the door and cloned the man.

I'll watch this group of girls to see how I can get them. It was five girls but one seemed to be falling ill. Her name was Lee. Lee was very sick. Before I knew it, Lee mindlessly walked into my mouth. She didn't mean to. I cloned her, fast and said to one of her friends, "Follow me, I found something cool!"

Person(one of the girls): We followed Lee to an odd place in the office. I felt off about it, it felt strange. I decided to stick with it until we got to the door. Lee closed it behind her and three of the other girls. Then I heard screams and slashing and chewing. The door creaked open to a room with yellow wallpaper, smeared with blood, and a beige carpet, blood stained.

I started to walk away and I screamed. The hole in the middle of the room started to breathe and ate me whole.

Building: I cloned all of the girls and carried on. Then I noticed something, a smell from the room I put my mouth in. The smell of rotting flesh and blood. People were coming in the room to investigate.

Then, I made the worst mistake of my life. I ate someone with all of the people watching me do it. Everyone exited the building quickly and I was alone. Until the end of time, I will be abandoned. I was off limits to people. Everyone was too afraid to tear me down. I watched them achieve space travel. I watched the planet thrive with nature again. And finally now, I found peace. I was a home to brand new animals like birds, insects, snakes, and more. I was peaceful. I was a building.



"THE TRUE ALCHEMISTS DO
NOT CHANGE LEAD INTO
GOLD; THEY CHANGE THE
WORLD INTO WORDS."

– WILLIAM H. GASS

