

## **First Place Prose – Elementary School**

**“Life as I Knew It”**

**By: Julia Retherford**

**Grade: 5**

**School: Petoskey Montessori**

Starting Here

Okay, here we go.

Yes, I'm 11

Yes, I'm in 5th grade

Yes, I have an Edge

It's part of me.

You don't know what the Edge is?!

Haha, well picture this:

A large segment of nothingness.

Darkness,

A Blank.

Picture a large gust of wind,

Or a tidal wave,

Shoving you into the nothingness.

Picture the only way getting out,

Is through a rope and harness,

Which someone else has to hold.

Who knows how long you'll be down there?

And No, you can not get out yourself

The Edge

It traps your screams.

It takes your breath.

It tells you

“No, you can't”

“You're hopeless”

“You're just not good enough”

“Don't try calling for help”

You're stuck down there.

Until someone hopes,

Until someone sees the rope,

And either,

Up you go,

Or down you go,

Deeper.

Trust

Who can I trust?

In this world full of people?

Who will hold the rope?

Friends?

Family?  
Who will watch you fall?  
Down  
Down  
Deeper.  
I'm unsure myself.

Stuck  
Hearing the voices,  
In my head.  
"Over there!" The Edge demands.  
I am thrown into my own closet,  
The tears welling in my eyes.  
"Look at you," The Edge coos. "So...Helpless."  
"Let me OUT!" I bang on the door.  
The Edge laughs.  
And I'm still in the closet,  
Alone.

Hope?  
I feel a tug at my chest.  
Someone has grabbed the rope.  
"Huh?" Calls the Edge.  
I'm going up.  
Higher,  
And faster.  
"Leave her down," growls the Edge.  
Whoever is pulling the rope slips.  
But I don't fall.  
I keep going up.  
"DOWN!" Barks the Edge  
But whoever is pulling the rope is determined.  
Very determined.  
And up I go.  
Racing to the top,  
And before I know it,  
I've reached it.

The Unknown Figure  
I land in front of a girl,  
About my age,  
Who's a bit taller than me.  
She's shaded by the darkness.  
The Edge is not happy.  
I start sliding back down.  
The girl reaches out her hand,  
And I grab it.  
"NOOO!" Cries the Edge.  
The girl helps me up.  
But the Edge knocks us back again

"YOU," The Edge says.  
I know it's talking to me.  
"YOU HAVE NEVER DESERVED TO NOT BE WITH ME,"  
The girl stands up.  
She balls her hands into fists.  
Something's coming.

The Unknown Figure VS The Edge  
The Edge looks at the girl.  
There is a moment of silence.  
And then,  
"YOU," The Edge is now talking to the girl.  
She doesn't quiver.  
She doesn't shake.  
She doesn't even move.  
"YOU DO NOT DESERVE TO LEAD THE GIRL!!" The Edge booms.  
"Well then neither do you."  
I gasp.  
"She deserves to be happy, just as much as anyone else."  
And she keeps going.

The Unknown Figure's Speech  
"Always being down with you is NOT something she wants,"  
She looks at me.  
"And I know."  
The Edge is silent.  
"Do I deserve to be happy?"  
I ask her.  
"YES!!" She says.  
She grabs my hands and helps me up.  
"I don't know who you are,"  
I whisper.  
"But thank you."  
And before I know what I'm doing,  
I hug the girl.  
And she gives me the biggest hug back.  
"You deserve to live the happy life that is planned for you,"  
The girl says in my ear.  
"Without the Edge"

I'm Back  
I look around me.  
Everything looks like it is getting played in slow motion.  
The Edge is melting.  
Melting.  
The girl exits the hug,  
And vanishes  
The Edge screams its last goodbye.  
And that's the last time I hear the Edge.  
I shut my eyes.

And when I open them,  
I'm back.  
In my bedroom,  
Outside of my closet,  
With Mona,  
In my bed.  
Mona lifts her head.  
She knows.

Seeing the Girl  
"Come on, do it!"  
My brother shouts up the sledding hill.  
He has created,  
A double-jump.  
I grip my sled.  
Should I? I ask myself  
"Yes," replies a voice.  
I spin around.  
"Huh?" I say.  
"Up here," says the voice.  
I look up.  
Sitting on a tree branch,  
Swinging her legs,  
Still shaded by the darkness,  
Is the girl's silhouette.  
"You should," she says.  
And when she says it,  
I want to do it.

The Girl, Unshaded  
I'm sitting in my room,  
Reading.  
Flipping the pages,  
Until,  
"Psst!"  
I look up from my book.  
And there stands the girl.  
But I can see her face.  
And she's beautiful.  
She got stunning blue eyes,  
Long dark brown hair,  
A lovely smile,  
She's wearing a dark blue sweatshirt,  
And some black leggings,  
And a dark blue hat to match her sweatshirt.  
I gasp.  
"You're the girl that helped me beat the Edge!"  
"Of course."

Meeting a New Friend

I shut my book,  
Hop out of my bed,  
And invade her with a hug.  
And she hugs me back.  
I pull away,  
Grab her hand,  
And invite her up onto the bed.  
She hops up,  
And so do I.  
"Thank you for helping me," I say.  
"Anytime," The girl says quietly.  
"So, what should I call you?"  
"I have a name,"  
"Really? What is it?"  
The girl smiles.  
"After all this time-"  
She smiles more.  
"You've finally found me. I'm Confidence."

My Inner Confidence  
"Confidence,"  
I breathe.  
I like that.  
Then something clicks.  
But Confidence says it before me.  
"I've been inside your heart, trying to show myself,"  
Confidence pauses.  
"And now I'm here. And my purpose is to help you."  
I smile at her.  
"And you already have."  
And my heart glows,  
And it feels as if,  
Confidence is sending good thoughts into my brain.  
And now when I need her,  
She's there.

A New Start  
It's a Saturday,  
Mona is laying on her bed,  
Chewing a deer antler,  
My Grandpa gave to her.  
Confidence smiles at me.  
And I smile back.  
I close my eyes,  
And think about where I am.  
Finally centered, I'm starting over, without the Edge.  
I have a new friend, Confidence,  
And I'm here.  
And happy.  
Happy to be me.

