

"Reflections on the Great Flood" Middleton H.S. Creative Writing Students

Student writing was included in the 2019 Phenology Calendar. Pieces not included in the calendar will be posted on the FOPBC Facebook page, every other day, from December, 2018 to early February, 2019.

Melanie Eichelberger

Clouds of mosquitoes swarmed above the concrete. They hover and float around aimlessly, hoping for a taste of blood. Little do they know, they're the ones who will be tasted. They nighthawks are coming. They awake early from their slumber, the sun still lurking in the horizon. A call is made, and it is time to feast. The birds form a flock, gliding through the trees and break out into the open night. The cloud is still there, still swarming, still hovering, still unknowing. One by one the nighthawks swoop into the cloud of insects and one by one the insects are devoured. There's no time to escape, no time to react. They're helpless, they're pathetic. It's survival of the fittest, and the strong always overpower the weak.

Will Pritchard

A Forest Growing Sideways

A crater has appeared in the forest.
It was not caused by bomb, or explosion, nor even a meteor.
What could've caused this calamity that destroyed so much?
It was water.
The life giving source itself, caused this destruction.

Now the trees are growing sideways.
Bridges lifted like feathers and contorted into pretzels.
Rivers turned into copper streams.
Clay and sand now replace the paths that once existed.
No roads, just sand.

The towering trees now lay on their sides in defeat.
Taking a nap, waiting to stand tall once more.
But they must wait a bit longer, because all we can do is watch.
So we watch the crater and the forest growing sideways.

Andrew Lund and Charlotte Dunn



NATURE

Waves of power strike down on the **helpless** and the hopeless people, with no sense of containment

Destruction takes no mercy, assaulting everything and everyone in the path ahead, virtually leaving an irreparable path of utter **disaster**

Mercy, an unfamiliar term takes no place in the unpredictable actions of nature

Carving out every last breath of hope spread throughout the **community**, stopping at nothing until left with nothing

Hesitating as the wrath of **catastrophic** disaster overwhelms even nature itself

Encountering nothing strong enough to prevent the well known damages to come

The well known reaction of thoughts and prayers is nearly wind compared to the tornado of **devastation**

Nature again claiming a **victorious** reign over all without a thought of failure

PEOPLE

Helpless cries can do nothing but watch innocent people wish it would stop
Fearfully looking down from the hilltop

No word from the forecaster,
But before we knew it there was a **disaster**
It couldn't have happened faster

With no idea it would hurt me
We asked for **mercy**
But now we have a new conservancy

With no immunity
We now have a land of opportunity
To rebuild with the **community**

Seen as a **catastrophe**
But actually
It's considered a masterpiece

At the first **encounter**
People had no enjoyment
But now we see empowerment

With such a raw sensation
The over hydration led to
Utter **devastation**

Nature is notorious
For being the most

victorious
Ending as the most
glorious

Hannah Ernst

“Little Fly”

It fascinates me
How something so small
So frail
So meaningless
Has the power
The ability
The determination
To control humans

We squirm in their presence
Desperate to avoid them
Desperate to escape the incessant hum
We trip
We itch
And a trail of blood
Is left in the aftermath

Their appetites
Rapacious
Their thirst
Quenched by the blood in our bodies
The chemicals in our skin
Nothing other than a cocktail
The mosquito
Nothing other than a little fly

Sam Williams

Mosquitoes

Annoying and Small
Will Suck Blood From Your Body
Seriously No

Pheasant Branch

Large Trees Overhead
Paths Trailing through Neighborhoods
Beautiful Creatures

Destruction

Water Everywhere
Trails and Bridges in pieces
August 20th

Brandon Dunk

An Impromptu Blood Drive

Looking down at the maze of tree limbs and caution tape, I am left wondering if the Conservancy will ever recover. The hundreds of pools left by the flood reflect the orange light trickling through the holes in the canopy. As darkness starts to envelop the valley, my thoughts are cut short. An airy whine begins to emerge out of the underbrush. The sound grows and solidifies, the thousand beating wings stopping briefly as the first mosquito lands on my leg. The air is suddenly thick. I try to breathe as I run to the car but only choke. Needles begin to pierce my skin, peeling it back to drain my blood. Trying to blink the insects out of my eyes, I fumble with my keys until I hear the clicking of locks and climb to safety. I take a breath. The forest returns to silence as the swarm retreats with my generous donation.

That is, until I get bit by one of the few who made it in.

Cole Hazlett

This Is Awful
Destroyed.

No more place to just walk.

No more trees to catch my drifting thoughts in their fingers.

My thoughts cannot be caught in the streets;

Stop signs do not have fingers.

I can see nothing for miles.

I do not want to "stop". I want to think.

People in the streets have places to be

And I have nowhere to go.

I am but a collection of burdens for other people

To want to ignore.

The Conservancy, how she loved me.

I have no trees, only paper.

The paper comes from the trees

But the pain from the paper is its own.

If my legs hurt in the woods, I can sit on a bench

And my thoughts will be with the trees.

If my wrist hurts from the pencil, I cannot stop writing

Or my thoughts will be with me.

My thoughts tear at my skull; they desire a host.

The streets cannot fill the needs of my thoughts

And the streets prosper beyond the trees.

Humanity has conquered nature.

My mind is with the trees but my body is human.

I am stronger than my mind

And I am my mind's protector.

My wrist will hurt but it is a sacrifice I must make.
Pain creates beauty.
Pain breeds creativity.

Annabelle Koethe

When We First Met

I was whole
We got to know
each other and
I've never been happier
Then spring became the summer,
we were running out of time.
You had to go on the road again,
Which to me seemed like a landslide;
and my heart
which came tumbling down
with rocks and thorns.
Dirt in my eyes
You broke my heart.
It is now filled with water
Where the growth of
rotten trees
And once beautiful,
Newly bloomed,
Flowers, once called home.
It's gone
Before I ever got to appreciate it
My pure,
Perfect, beautiful, little
Heart.

Norma Benally Thompson

home
that's what she was called
to us she was a sanctuary
until the rushing water came
drowned by sorrow she fell
then she was no longer
a home

Elora Becker

Fire in Fall

Autumn hits tree leaves like a
contagious wildfire.

A brilliant orange flame at the bottom reaches wider and climbs higher.

Energetic and free, the color spreads to every leaf it knows.

Sadly, the brisk winds extinguish the flames
with bellowing blows.

The Autumn that instinctively ignites fire and daringly wipes
burning flames away

is also responsible for the shortening of the day.

Hearty king from September twenty-two through

December twenty-one,

Autumn gives and takes at will for the sake
of vibrant fun.

Melanie Eichelberger

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Leah Huggett

Mosquitoes

Slapping my arms angrily.

Everyone watching me, I feel stupid.

As my hands shake, I can't stop.

My body has a mind of its own,
and the bites need to be itched.

I visibly cringe as a mosquito buzzes

Past my ear, scoping out its next victim.

I pray silently that it isn't me.

I've had enough.

I hate mosquitoes.

Buzz, it flies past my ear, buzz.

Hope they go extinct.

Mar Ehmpke

The sky flashes on and off with terrifyingly bright lights. Gray clouds above drop thick sheets of rain. Not a normal rain of healing and growth, it's instead one that causes nothing but destruction. Not even the stars in the inky black sky can break through the cloudy barrier between them and the land. The ground cries out, being swept away by a river that wasn't here mere moments ago. Trees fall, plants drown, and every person is

just trying to take cover, stay safe, stay inside. But there are those who cannot. The trees, the dirt, the flowers, they cannot. And would they if given the choice? No. They will stay, stoically watching this apocalyptic event. Even if it means they will be washed away, never to be the same, it doesn't matter. This event needs them as witnesses. But they know, deep down, that soon the rain will stop, the clouds will part as if the sky itself has cracked open, and they will once again be watched by the protective gaze of the stars and the moon.

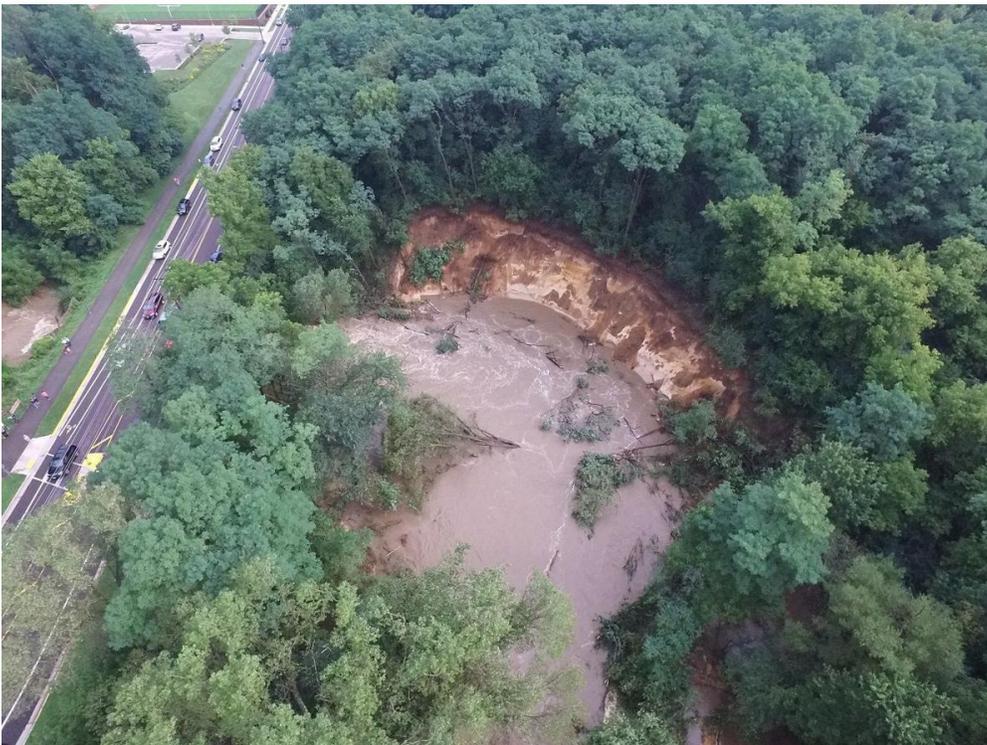
Isabel Dagitz

Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes swarmed around the night sky, flying in the air like a cloud but lacking the ethereal beauty. The buzz in my ear could be mistaken for tinnitus if it wasn't for the changing pitch as the insects flew forward and back. They swooped down enough to brush into my awareness before shooting up again, as though we were playing a game of tag where they were perpetually "it". My hand went up to try and slap the insects away but somehow all it landed on was empty skin. The mosquitoes had a way of avoiding my attacks, as though they had a way of freezing time to get away and then speeding it up again once they were safely gone. I groaned in frustration and tried again, but my attempts were in vain. The insects continued to swarm towards me, taunting me with their closeness.

Sam Gessler

The view from the sky was astonishing. A mile long scar in the Earth dominated the landscape, as if the ground had been slashed by a gigantic sword. The skin of trees had been ripped away, leaving a deep crater in its place. Muddy water pounded up from the gash, filling the wound with the blood of the land. Nearby, the water threatened to damage the vital organ connecting the two nearby schools. Slowly, doctors began to reach the site with surgical excavation equipment, examining the best way to clean out the infectious debris. The healing process had begun.



Abbigale Ahlborn

Pheasant Branch a home to all,
Now a home to none.
Washed away in the rain,
Leaving many in pain.
Rebuilding everyday,
But it will never be the same.
I wish the sun was here to stay,
And nothing got washed away.
We will always have the memories,
And the thoughts of how it used to be.

Callie Moyer

Broken

Peace.
The memories rushed through me,
faster than the water crashing in the stream.
Laughter, joy, happiness.
Crossing over the bridge that once stood tall.
Anxiety slipping from my consciousness,
birds chirping in the trees.

Destruction.
Moments like these washed away forever.
Bridges crumbled.
Trees were killed.
The ground beneath us,
broken forever.

Jack Thompson

And still, the leaves are
greener than they've been before,
solemnly thriving.

Emily Jimenez

1)
I get tired of the rain,
Those dark, grey, dreary days
Here it comes again.

But were we ready for it?
Water soaring above you
We thought nothing of it
But it wouldn't stop
So we start to panic
I would never think in a million years
Life itself would feel so helpless.

2)
I played in this stream as a child,
When the ravine seemed so endless and wild.
The water was clear and smelled so clean,
It was so long ago that it seems like dream.

Sami Woldt

My Home

Where I went on a quest through the woods,
Where I went on an exploration during Biology,
Where I went to go take photos,
Where I used to go to get away from the world for a bit,
Where I used to hide from friends,
Where I experienced wildlife,
Where I brainstormed my genuine ideas,
Where I pretended I'll fall in as I hopped over the stones,
Where I invented an art project that came to life,
Where I could wander and get lost,
Where I could live my day peacefully,
Where I met my bestest friends,
Where I learned impactful knowledge during class trips,
Where I experienced true happiness,
Where I made my greatest memories,

Pheasant Branch,
You will forever be my home

Sami Woldt

My Memories

I remember the first photo club meeting. We all introduced ourselves, grabbed our cameras and headed outside. I had never heard of Pheasant Branch or the Conservancy before, and had no idea how much of an impact it would have on my life. I remember passing by the practice field and Clark Street, and hopping down the steps. As I look up, I am mesmerized by the view: there's a beautiful bridge, connecting the two endless graveled roads, with steps guiding a separate pathway across the water. I see thirty-foot trees touching the clouds as I point my camera up towards the sky. Everywhere I look, I see the true meaning of nature and I begin to let my imagination go wild. I picture creatures hiding in the bushes, and people climbing up to the tippy tops of trees. I see campers huddled around the logs, telling scary ghost stories while laughing and

enjoying gooey s'mores. I imagine Biology students learning about ecosystems and how tiny aquatic organisms live in the water. As I get lost in the hidden trails, I am not aware of all the great memories that I will have, and how much of a loss it will be after the flood.

I will miss the adventures that I had, discovering new trails and finding new perspectives of nature with my camera.

I will miss the dedication that I gave for the Pheasant Branch photo contest.

I will miss all of the memories that I created with all of my new friends that I met there.

I will miss all of the fun class trips during Biology and Fitness for Life, where I learned so much from studying microorganisms and keeping up my heart rate while walking on the road.

I will miss all of the trees that I attempted to climb, in order to impress my friends.

I will miss that one time I fell into the water after missing the last stone, which at the time wasn't that funny, but makes me laugh every time I think about it.

I will forever miss the times that I spent in Pheasant Branch and how it has influenced me.

All of the memories, all of my happiness is gone and I can never get that back. I can only wish for the best, and hope that one day I be able to return and make new memories with the people that I love most.

Nadia Langley

Light In the Dark

I remember the time my bike was stuck at school.

I stayed after for rehearsal and it was past seven, getting dark.

With the size of its frame, the bike wouldn't fit in the trunk so I told my mom I could ride it home, "Down through Pheasant Branch, it's safe."

The blazing white light shining from my handlebars fades into a haze six feet in front of me.

The first slight descent drives me through the night,

Wind passing like a flood against my skin, through my hair.

Silent trees bend as I fly below,

The pounding of blood in my ears the only sound.

Coming up the final hill, calves burning to fight the ascent,

I reach Century and the glow of its street lights.

Out of the dark; a beast from the deep,

My breath a primeval gasp: a silent roar into the night.

Mallory May

One August Evening

In the middle of our town,

sits a forest of green and brown.

Where birds sit idly by

and overhead looms the clear blue sky.

But one August evening
left everyone grieving
the loss of our beloved Pheasant Branch,
as the floods came down like an avalanche.
A place formerly filled with laughter and flowers,
caved in, in a matter of hours.
Trees once rooted 30 feet above
came tumbling down onto the paths and bridges we loved.
These trees bent, cracked and fell.
All that was left was the swampy smell
of the waves that rushed in and slaughtered
the greenery that sank underwater.
From my childhood to my adolescence,
I grew up walking through Pheasant Branch.
The memories my family has created there will always last,
even though it was destroyed much too fast.

Antonio Ponce

Flooding took down so much it's hard to believe. Trees who have stood for centuries now lay on the ground waiting to decay. Roads are washed away and places that were once a nice place to take a stroll are now closed off areas of destruction. The flooding was a historic event, that may only happen once in a blue moon. We can not allow a once in a lifetime event change the place we call home for long. People have suffered huge losses. Houses are battered from the waters and some have been permanently damaged at their very foundations. Healing from what happened won't be easy, but it's important we start as soon as possible. The Conservancy is a small escape from life we cannot afford to lose during our toughest hours. Restoration must be made one of our highest priorities in bringing back a sense of normality. If the Conservancy stays in its state of disrepair it'll only serve as a cruel reminder of the carnage brought upon us. We need to move past.

Hills that have fallen cannot be rebuilt easily, and most likely, cannot be rebuilt at all. We can still prevent more destruction however. New slopes which land can easily slide off of can be reinforced to stop us from losing more trees than we already have. Weak wooden bridges that were washed away can be rebuilt, with sturdier foundations and more solid materials. Roads once made of crumbly gravel can be paved over with smooth and permanent asphalt. Improvements can be made so that what happened this time cannot happen again.

Loss isn't to be taken at face value, if anything, this is an opportunity.

Cameron Regan

Once Unharmd

At first glance, this photo appears to capture the former resting spot of a meteor in the heart of southern Wisconsin. Tree branches can be seen collapsing inwards, as they rest on the walkway that has been turned to a state of rubble. The grey haze that the Sunday sky lures over the town sparks a feeling of shock, as the jaws of passersby can be imagined landing with a thud on the cold, wet sidewalk. But as your eyes gaze closer into the photo, it can easily be reminded of the true original state of this sinkhole like structure. Your

mind suddenly takes a sprint back to the month of July, you now can be reminded of brisk walks through that once flatly-paved walkway. It is here where the tree branches intertwined over your head, forming a trail of shade to sooth that hot summer afternoon. A roaring stream flows along your path, flabbergasted by the rain showers of yesterday evening. The chirping of birds and the humming of bees join the river in a serenade that only mother nature can share. A light gust of wind flows around your body, wiping the sweat that casually flows down your face. Then you feel a drop of sweat roll down your cheek. Suddenly your emotions feel as if they have come crashing back into the present. That was no drop of sweat, that was a tear. A tear reminding you of the decimated state of what was once the prized image of your quaint Wisconsin town. What was once practically untouched by modern day technology is now in the hands of construction men, examining the utter devastation. And what was once the path of your summer afternoon strolls is now guarded by yellow tape stretching across a crumpled line of pavement. Your chest slowly caves into your heart, as you turn your head away from the image of desolation that has captivated the local community. Citizens can be seen peering into the heart-tearing tragedy when you glance back into the photo one last time, only to suffer the same emotional experience that you have felt.

Maria Perez-Torres

Devastation
Looking up,
all I saw was destruction.
Who knew that nature could destroy itself.
Something so beautiful,
is now a wreck.
So much devastation in a matter of hours.
Water, so much water.
You can hear it tearing everything apart.
A place so beautiful,
is now gone.
Walking through there gave me hope.
Fresh air.
Flowers.
Butterflies.
All dark thoughts went away.
Vanished.
In a world full of madness,
this was my escape.
While I walked,
These black thoughts turned into a wide spectrum of colors.
It was my shelter.

Julia Geppert

The Beauties of Pheasant Branch

My friends and I are walking through the beautiful Pheasant Branch. I can feel the wind flow through my long, curly hair. As I keep walking, I gaze around and see the tall, wide trees that have plants at the bottom. The plants were bright green and looked as if you could put them in a bouquet of flowers. I hear the many different birds chirping and the squirrels running through the tall brush. We pass a friendly-looking

family taking a bike ride while enjoying the different noises in the outdoors. I smell the fresh air and the lovely scent of colorful flowers. We come across the immense hill in the prairie that is filled with interesting wild plants. My friends and I hike all the way to the very tippy top. Eventually we stop to take a break and watch the magnificent sunset. Shades of pink and orange fill all across the horizon. I feel happiness as I watch the sun go down in the most incredible place. Enjoying the time I have with my close friends. As we watch the sunset it feels as if we are the only ones on this gigantic world we live in.