



# The O'Rourke Observer

A Literary Journal

~Fall of '24~



# Taken by a Quake

## Spooky Short Story by Elizabeth L.

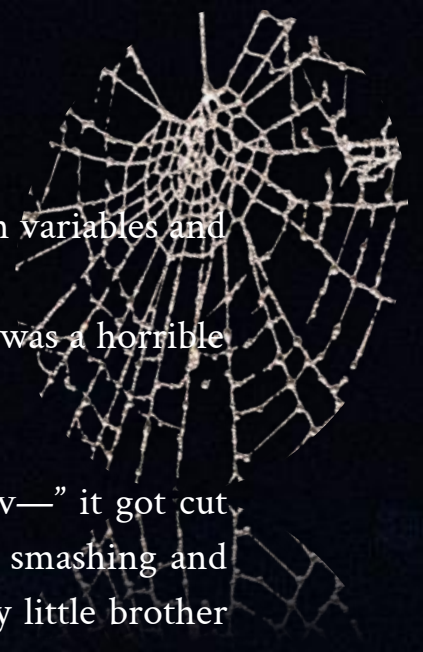
I was sitting at the kitchen table, doing my math homework. I was getting mixed up with variables and hearing the TV blare in the other room with my little sisters and my little brother.

*Wait, so,  $x$  equals seventeen?* I wondered. I huffed. Math sucks. All of a sudden there was a horrible blaring sound

“Oh, *bleep* weather alerts,” Mom mumbled. She did not really say “bleep.”

“Attention San Francisco and areas near it. There has been reported tectonic activ—” it got cut off. Then the entire house began to sway and jump. It screamed and wailed, glass was smashing and splitting. My twin sisters, Robin and April dove under the card table and screamed. My little brother Tyler went with them. I slid under the kitchen table with my other little sister, Lottie. We bounced up and down all over the floor. My knees were pounding on the floor. I held Lottie tight to myself and cried.

“Why does Pacific Heights have to be so close to San Francisco?!” Lottie sobbed. I squeezed her. We shut our eyes and held on tight. We were bumped apart, only our hands holding each other. My stomach was hammering on the wood. We slid to the left and then the right within seconds. Something cut into my back and I screamed. Glasses hurdled to the floor, fracturing left and right. I was thrown in the air and then—darkness.



I woke up in pain.

“Mom,” I wheezed. My lungs were filled with dust. My lips were chapped, along with the rest of my body. I made sure I did not have amnesia.

*Okay. I am Sabrina Anastasia MacQuoid. I live at 2821 Octavia Street, Pacific Heights, California, USA. But I don't know where I am now.* I pondered.

I opened my eyes and looked at my surroundings. I was lying down, no doubt. I was on a street but I was covered by tons and tons of wood. Dusty, faded wood. I could faintly hear city noises outside.

The last thing I remembered was being under the kitchen table with Lottie, bouncing around. I realized I had been in an earthquake. Now I was buried and I didn't know what to do. I desperately wanted someone to yell my name. Someone to just yell “Nina!” and take me home. I looked around to see if Lottie was still there, but she was gone. I peeked behind me. The land had given in and it was just down, down, down, down. Probably the fall of a building, possibly my house.

It was sweaty down there, with very little air getting through to me. I took off my pink “Fun Run” sweatshirt. I slipped a little, but regained my balance.

I reached the bottom of the collapsed building. I was surprised to see normal human things. A TV, books, toys, games, a couch, blankets, and more. I realized this was a basement. My basement. This means that I had fallen *out* of my house when the earthquake happened, the building collapsed (luckily not crushing me), and I was buried under its remains. Now I was in my dusty black leggings, dusty pink sweatshirt, dusty blue “mathletes” tee and my dusty ponytail. My once chocolate brown hair was now the color of sand from all the dust.

Just then, the ground began to shake, not as violently as the earthquake, but still very hard. I fell, ripping open my ankle on a piece of wood. I limped back up the hill to the pile of wood where I could hear the outside.

“I heard it was 5.8!” exclaimed a female voice.

“My buddy said it was 6.4!” responded a male voice. I could tell they were close by, so I tried to get their attention.

“Guys! It’s me! I’m trapped! Nina MacQuoid!” I shouted. I tried to move the rubble, but it wouldn’t budge. I heard them walk away. I fell to my knees. I was desperately trying to move the rubble. I pounded on it, I kicked it, I threw rocks at it, I clawed at it, but nothing worked. I cried. I ran to my basement and looked into a mirror. Where my tears had glided down my cheeks there were streaks of skin that weren’t dusty. I scrunched my face to a scowl and ran back up the hill. I brainstormed plans to get out of there. I checked to see if I had my phone. I did, but it was broken. Suddenly, my stomach had an earthquake of its own. I was hungry, I needed to eat. I had an idea.

I went back to my basement and tried to climb the stairs. I did not fall through. I got upstairs only to find everything in pieces. Luckily, the floor was not in too many pieces, so I could still crawl across to the back door. I pushed it open and got to the back yard. Unfortunately, the backyard was fenced in but high piles of debris from the disaster.

I crawled back inside and pulled open the fridge. There were things left in it, but I didn’t know how long I had been unconscious so I didn’t take my chances. I busted open the buried pantry. I ate some crackers and peanut butter.



I crawled to the yard and did some damage assessments. I realized the part blocking the back of the yard, across from the house, was a fallen building. It had many windows, so I used them like a ladder. I grabbed each sill like a rock climber. When I got to the top I was at least thirty feet off the ground. I could see everything.

I've always been a little short for my age, so this made me feel like I could touch the sky.

Scanning the ground for my family, I noticed that there were many people out. Of course, that would make sense considering the city had just suffered a major earthquake and many of their homes had been destroyed. Then I saw a woman carrying something large under a dusty blue blanket. I realized horribly that it was a woman and a child, a dead child. I couldn't make out the face of either so I began to worry. It could have been my mom and one of my sisters!





# Fall Writing Prompts

- 1. Write about a fall memory- Include sensory details like taste, touch, sight, smell, and hearing!**
- 2. Write a story set in fall. Try to have the character's environment affect the story!**
- 3. Imagine you are a bird migrating south for winter, flying above the fiery trees. Describe how you feel and what you see.**



The image features three lit candles against a black background. The candles are positioned in a row, with the tallest one on the left, a shorter one in the center, and another tall one on the right. Their flames are bright yellow and orange, casting a warm glow. Overlaid on the scene is the title 'Candle of Hope' in large white letters, the author's name 'By: Alex L. (Grade 6)' in smaller white letters, and a poem in orange text.

# Candle of Hope

By: Alex L. (Grade 6)

Hope is a candle in the dark  
It spreads warmth and joy to all  
You can find it in the smallest cracks  
Hope is all around

# A Frightening Tale Told In

## Poetry

By Elizabeth L.

The curtains are dreadful and openly torn  
A brand new midnight is born  
In the soulless paralyzing black of night  
Monsters and phantoms come for fright  
The lingering presence in the air  
Something in the shadows with an endless

stare

Silence.

Death.

Eyes.

Fear.

There is nothing I can hear  
But with my darkness adjusted eyes  
The shadow looks like my demise  
A hand outstretched towards my bed  
The hand is terribly bloody red  
A voice is chanting in my head  
"Come to me outside your bed,"  
I creep onward into the dark  
The creature in the shadows makes its mark  
Drags me with its tough hands  
"Into the dark," it demands  
It reveals its bloody face  
In my mind there is suddenly space

Black.

Sad.

Scared.

Gone.

The space is endlessly long  
Feel the likeness of my soul  
Into blackness it shall roll  
My eyes are blurry, sad and strong  
But with my breath my life feels wrong  
Another breath that I take  
Shall I ever really wake?  
Facing death, facing life  
I try to take my moments in strife

Black.

Anger.

Fear.

Tears.

The end feels quite near  
In my mind I shed my life  
But in real I am still alive  
Thankful for this life-filled moment  
The pain hurts more when I don't show it  
I will not give in to it  
But if I don't it'll have a fit  
Crying tears of endless peril  
I remember my old Auntie Cheryl  
She always told me not to fret  
But in this moment I do dread  
Losing life to this soulless thing  
In my ears I hear a ring



# Windy Fall

Day ~ ~

Blowing in corn fields

Clouds in autumnal light

Sun pry through the clouds

Fresh harvest to be

Hope be sprinkled in the air

Love of leaves crunched



Elizabeth L. Grade 6







# The weeping willow

By Alice P.

The willow has been crying for all eternity

No one can save her from her misery

All she has ever wanted was to stop sobbing

She sheds more leaves and tears as she grows older

until the day her wish was made true

She has earned the gift of being tearless,

Although it has greatly cost her



# Alone

By: Quinn C (8th grade)

When you feel alone.

Your mind tingles  
like bubbly soda

You feel the air densen

Your voice box bubbles up like milk, as you blow into the straw

Your heart tries to copy the beat of your **racing** thoughts

But your eyes jump in the way

You feel your misty breathe hiding on your nose

But when you squeeze your eyes closed

You realize

You were never alone.



# ~Seasons~

By: Elizabeth L. 6th grade

*Bewitching, divine*

*Winter to work, of white snow*

*Sensational, rare*

*Enlivening, cold*

*Extraordinary, warm, fair*

*Delicate, splendid*

*Showstopper, dreamboat*

*Beautiful, goddess, sublime*

*Summer is heaven*

*Autumn splendor is*

*Falling leaves to land below*

*Gorgeous, wonderful*





# The Fire

By Alice P.

The trees are like a blaze

With fiery reds and burnt oranges

The leaves are having a masquerade ball

Disguising their earthy tones in flames

A scorching mosaic



# Getting used to Middle School

By June B. (6th grade)

Getting used to middle school was a big change and challenge for the new 6th graders at first, but with time everything got easier. Most big questions have been answered by now and most have settled into a routine. Before middle school, especially the week leading up to the first day of school, I can confidently say all 6th graders were nervous. I think half of us were nervous-excited, and the other half of us was nervous-dreading the start of school. Questions were no doubt running through everyone's mind. Will I get lost?

Will my teachers be nice? Will I have friends in my classes? Over time, we all realized middle school wasn't scary at all. In fact it was even better than elementary school in some ways. Middle school went from new and scary to new and different to just another part of our routines. The first couple weeks felt like one big challenge, with figuring out everything there was to figure out. It was pretty much smooth sailing after that. Now, we know where all our classes are, all the teachers, all the kids in our classes, and are even making new friends. The hardest part about middle school is definitely getting through the crowded halls, especially when it's 8 in the morning and I'm barely awake. Middle school has turned out to not be a super-scary place.





~Autumn Is Here~

By June B. (6th grade)

It whistles through the few remaining leaves

It tickles the noses and cheeks of children

It dances through the streets

It whispers all around the houses

Singing 'Autumn is near' all through the town

Shouting 'Autumn is here' right in your face

As it whips through the town

It twirls and flies through every yard

It feels as if it might whisk you away into the great blue sky

It is wind that whistles and tickles and dances

It is wind that whispers and sings and shouts

It is wind that whips and twirls and flies

It is wind telling you autumn is here

# The Importance of Yoga Practice - An Article Elizabeth L. - 6

Yoga is important because it reduces stress. Stress is a fundamental part of getting sick. If you've been sick and all you have been feeling is anxious you might need a yoga break. Your body has learned to be tense as a natural reaction to everyday life. You will be physically and mentally limited. Yoga can loosen your muscles and have a positive impact on your development.





# Thanks for reading!!

Remember our articles come out once every two months, and we are always looking for new members! Please recommend to a friend and feel free to submit a piece to [vwadsworth@bhbl.org](mailto:vwadsworth@bhbl.org).