

Rio Meyers-Dahlkamp
7th Grade, Canyon School
Our 12 Years
1st Place, Middle School Creative Writing

I was in depression.
I always wondered what
depression
was,
how it felt, how
you thought
and now... I know.

I was looking around at the world
and seeing
all the problems I grazed over before,
things I did not notice
things that people did not notice.

I noticed stuff that is seen as silly in our world.
I noticed that people did not notice
that as they moved around the world
they were killing
hundreds upon thousands
of bacteria.

I noticed that people are so sad
when someone is killed,
which IS sad.
but I saw that they are not
sad when hundreds of cows
are killed in the slaughterhouse
every day.

I noticed
that our world was messed up
along with the system we lived in.
I wanted
a world
in which nothing died,
there was no pain,
and no injustice.

I was trapped...

Luckily my family got me
out of it. My parents showed me
what a world without death
would look like.
They showed me
death was part of nature, and
nature would not work without it.
Even with this I felt
that it was wrong of me to live
in this world, hurting it

and not healing it,
not giving back. So now,

I want a world
in which there is a healthy amount of death
and a healthy amount of life.

I want a world
in which ecosystems are in balance and people respect
the earth.

So I decided
I would help make the change.

Me and my sister made
our own Earth Guardians Bay Area chapter.
Once we had a full group
we were invited to speak
at an action that was asking Sen. Dianne Feinstein
to support
the Green New Deal.

Since then
it has been a blur,
like a tornado
around me,
chances flying
all over the place.
Interviews, short documentaries, movie stars, marches,
but in this world not everybody will agree
with what you believe.

As I scrolled
through the comments on the video
I saw the haters.

They said fake is true, fiction is fact,
youth activists are political props.
They said we have no say,
opinion and knowledge.

But we say
we are rising
from all walks of life,
we won't lose our opportunity.
Our 12 years.
Just so the world knows, we won't stop, I won't stop.

- By Rio Meyers-Dahlkamp