

# 2018 YOUNG PEOPLE'S Creative Writing Contest

FOR AGES 10-18

“Blue-Haired Baby” by August Dickman  
1<sup>st</sup> Place, Short Story 10-12

Poems ● Essays ● Comix  
Short Plays ● Short Stories

CASH PRIZES!

Entries Accepted Feb. 1-March 3

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## The Blue Haired Baby

The word "different" has been there in my mind clogging my thoughts, my confidence, and my life. The word just sits there telling me I'm "different". "Different" saying I'm no good, that I'm just a girl with some disability, with some diagnosis. There are different types of different. There's good different. But my different is a bad different.

I remember when I was 3 mom told me I was "unique" or "special". Then I had no idea what those words meant. I thought that maybe they were cool words, until I asked at five. I wanted to know what she meant. She said that kids don't have blue hair; they have blonde, brown, or black. She said that I was "different". My whole life I've been called "different".

Mom tells me the story about the day I was born. She says she remembers the doctors just looking at me. She couldn't see what they were looking at. She says that they gave her the look of grief, sorrow, disbelief. Dad looked pale. She thought I was dead. They didn't let her see me. They rushed away the blue haired baby.

There have been many things that have made me feel like I'm meant to have an awful life. For example, when I was 7 mom and dad gave me a puppy. He was about 3 months old, a small papillon dog with big ears. He loved belly rubs; he also liked to play fetch. We named him Belly because he would run up to you, bark so you would see him, then hit your hand until you gave him a belly rub. One month after getting him we took him for his first walk; he was so happy. When we were about halfway done a big, no, massive dog came around the corner. He looked like a Boxer or Pitbull mix. He started to head towards us running so fast that I could barely pick up Belly in time for me to even have a chance. Mom yelled and said to run, but I knew if I did that the dog would just chase after me. So I slowly walked away, the end of Belly's leash dragging the ground. Next thing I knew, I was being pulled down and

dragged. The dog had the end of the leash in his mouth. I was still holding on to Belly. I knew that if I let go the dog would kill him. But if I didn't, he would choke from the dog pulling me and him by the collar. So I let go. I let go of him, just a bit, but it was too late. If I hadn't done that, I could have just un-clicked the leash and ran with him in my arms. That wasn't the case though. I saw Belly laying there. The owner of the big dog was crying and saying sorry. I remember yelling, "WHY ARE YOU CRYING? YOUR DOG ISN'T THE ONE DEAD!" before even knowing that I wouldn't see Belly again, knowing that he was gone, dead. I lost him last summer, my only true friend. The only one that had never called me different.

Today I go to a fancy doctor's appointment. Its Monday, Presidents Day. No school! I'm not super excited. They never know what's wrong with me. I get poked, I get pinched, and they still don't know why I have blue hair. This doctor is more of a science one. He's more science based then medical based like most. He's not cheap, at least that's what I overheard my parents say.

When I see Dr. Rag's face I let out a chuckle. He has a receding hair line, short, a bit chubby, but has a nice smile. He also has puffy hair and big glasses like a mad scientist.

"Hello, let's see here, Sky!" he said while looking at his chart. "Let's get you started! Oh, a real quick question! Would you like to meet my daughter after?"

"We'd love to!" mom says in a cheerful voice.

"Yeah, that would be nice." I say shyly; thinking mom is getting on my nerves and trying to help me make friends.

5 minutes later

"What's Dr. Rag's daughter's name?" I ask the nurse. There's a girl at school whose last name is Rag too. She's not nice at all! She always thinks I'm lying about my hair, and bullies me. We have been in the same class since kindergarten. Now we're in sixth, so it's been 7 long years with Alice the bully.

"Alice," the nurse said. The room fills with silence. Wait...no way... it's...

"HER," I yell. Oh whoops, that was meant for my mind.

"Are you okay?" Dr. Rag asks.

"Yeah, sorry" I say.

It's been a week since the test and seeing Alice at the doctor's office. It was weird at first because she was really nice to me, but now I know why. She thought I was lying about my hair the whole time, but when she saw me at the doctor really trying to know what's wrong, she felt bad, and knew I was really born with blue hair. It will be nice to maybe have a new friend.

The next day

"SKY? YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO SKY? OH MY GOD!!! JUST HOLD ON DOCTOR!" mom yells.

"Mom? Are you ok?" I said." Wait... is it the, THE DOCTORS OFFICE?" I scream.

"They know, THEY KNOW! SKY THEY KNOW WHATS HAPPENED WITH YOUR HAIR!" she yells frantically.

"WHAT? MOM TELL ME! I HAVE TO KNOW!"

My hair is not hair; it's blue blood cells. When I was in the womb my hair wouldn't form, so my blue blood cells did instead. My blood just makes some weird form of hair. So somehow my body produces more blue blood, and it transforms into something doctors and scientist have never seen until now.

1 month later

Alice and all of her friends are now my friends. We all have a sleepover planned for next week at Laila's house (that's one of my new friends)! Alice has really changed. We are all going to have a bake sale to raise money for No More Bullying. It was her idea.

You know how I've always thought having blue hair was the worst thing ever, well I think making friends was the problem. I may still have blue hair, but at least it's easier now to make friends.

"What should we do now guys?" I ask, so tired I'm about to fall off of my pillow throne I made.

"OMG!" Kelly screams. Kelly is the most annoying girl in the WORLD but for some reason we all still love her. She's always like "OMG" and "EW" and "TOTALLY"!

"Shut-, please be quiet. I told you my mom would get mad if we were too loud!" Laila says in a whisper.

"FINE! As I was saying, until I got interrupted, I think we should tell sad stories!" Kelly says.

"Yeah, I have plenty!" I said. We all laugh, because they know my hair has been a crazy story and that I haven't had many friends. I decide to tell them about Belly and the walk. After, they're all crying. I told them about the big dog, me crying, and how we buried him in our backyard, also how dad made a casket for him.

"Sky! I'm so sorry, I think it's made you a better person. You know what it's like to lose someone or something you love, you know what it's like to be lonely, and what it's like to be different." Laila says.

"Wait, what do you mean *different*?" I yell. The word has returned. It's returned to my mind twice as mean since its coming from, well what I thought was a friend

"Oh no, Sky not that different!" Alice says.

"Then what does *"this"* different mean?" I ask, getting my phone out to call my mom to pick me up. I thought they were my friends.

"Different means..." Kelly starts.

"Unique, rad, beautiful," Laila says.

"New, cool, great, awesome" Alice says.

"A good person," Laila says.

"No, a good friend" Kelly corrects.

"The girls are right, you're all in one!" Alice said. "You're special Sky, really. Not in the blue hair way, but in the friend way."

I drop my phone, it falls to a pillow. I start to cry. I've never been called any of those things. Those wonderful things.

There are two kinds of different. One is the different that is bad, the different Sky thought she was. Then there's the good different. But Sky changed this. There aren't just two types of different. There's the Sky different. The different that describes you. We all have our different. Your different might be your religion, body, race, skin, disability, gender, or hair. There are so many types of different. Find yours. This different describes you. Make your own different. Be your different. Be you.

2018 YOUNG PEOPLE'S  
**Creative Writing Contest**  
FOR AGES 10-18

**“Thirty-six” by James Walsh**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Place, Short Story 10-12**

**Poems** ● **Essays** ● **Comix**  
**Short Plays** ● **Short Stories**

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Thirty-six

It was Halloween, and I had math homework. I mean, seriously, who on Earth gives math homework on Halloween? Linear equations? What *even is* a linear equation? Besides a function table and coordinate plane, I was lost. Plus, to top it off, all my friends were getting to go trick-or-treating! It's only because I was sent to study hall, and they didn't even let me bring anything to study! Taking the study out of study hall, am I right? So, there I was, doing the last problem on the worksheet, mumbling in confusion. I realized that I could just slip the paper under my bed, then wait until morning when I'd pull it back out again. It was genius! I tip-toed towards my bed, making sure no one could hear me. Just a few more steps...

"Jackson!" my mom called from downstairs.

"What's up?"

"Are you done with your homework?"

Blasts! My master plan was ruined. I slyly stepped back towards the desk. "Working on it," I grunted. I stared blankly at the sheet of paper. It wasn't like it was going to do itself. Trying to make sense of the gibberish numbers scattered all around the paper, I forced my mind to call back on what the teacher had said. I made the graph and wrote the function. Plugging in the X-axis, I stared in disbelief. Nine times four? They should be teaching me how to multiply, let alone solving a linear equation. I pulled out a sheet of loose-leaf paper and created an advanced formula to solve the near-impossible problem. I had finally grasped hold of my answer. Twenty-three? That couldn't be right. We weren't allowed to use a calculator, so I used a search engine instead. That wasn't cheating, was it? My thumbs typed the multiplication



problem. I didn't notice the fateful typo. Somehow, in some crazy way, my typo had pulled up secret government files laying across the web. I looked at the files. They were random numbers that made no sense to me, but I figured I would have at least one or two friends that could translate them. Suddenly I heard a sound coming from the downstairs. I grabbed my trusty baseball bat, Big Bertha, and walked towards the noise. I heard the exact same sound again. I stepped closer. "Guys?" I called. "Is this your idea of a joke?" The noise came back.

"Hi-yah!" I whipped around, slashing Big Bertha in front of me. The sound was coming from the TV. Suddenly it flickered on! The president's face appeared on the screen! I gave him a dorky salute.

"Jackson Welsh," the president said deeply. "You are now the president of the United States of America."

My mouth fell to the floor. I practically fainted. "Wait," I confirmed. "You're telling me..."

"Precisely."

"How?!?"

"The secret government files you accessed granted you permission to become president. Look outside."

I crawled towards the front door. It was impossible. I couldn't believe it. My body miraculously pulled itself up and my hands reached the door. I twisted the knob.

"Oof," I grunted. It had seemed like the whole paparazzi just slammed into my stomach. I looked around. It was the paparazzi! Two security guards rushed to my aide.

"Step aside, please," one said.

"Make way for the president," the other one started to push people out of the way.

"Huh?" this had to be fake. A guard turned towards me.

"I've prepared a jet for us," he leaned back into his walkie-talkie and spoke our coordinates.

They had finally cleared the cameramen and reporters from our yard. The private jet had landed on top of our garage.

"We'll pay for the damage," the guard smiled at me.

It was much too good to be true. A twelve-year-old accessing government files while searching for the answer to nine times four? Only happens once in a man's life. I hopped into the jet and selected the song I wanted to listen to.

"Buckle up, kid," the pilot smirked. "It's going to be a long flight." The jet zoomed at speeds I didn't know were possible.

We had finally made it. My butler was introduced to me. He told me where I was going to be sleeping. I asked him if he knew anything about politics. He said he was just a butler.

It was a long day. I figured I would sleep now, handle the political stuff later.

I woke up, nothing but politics on my mind. I started small. I figured I would make a deal with Canada to combine countries. You should have seen the way the newspaper reacted. Then I scheduled a meeting with the top bands to rename their songs after me. Complete waste of time. They complained about originality or whatever. I figured I would give the nuclear codes to my parents. I think you might see where I'm going with this. All in all, it wasn't a very good day. I figured I would have better luck tomorrow. I was wrong. Completely and utterly wrong.

My butler woke me up. He said something urgent was happening and there was something that I needed to see. I could already taste the trouble. He took me to see a window and he pointed outside.

"What?" I said. "I can't see anything." Then I saw it. They were birds--no, they were planes. "We're under attack!" I screamed. At least it was a man scream. I ran to the door, trying to escape. My butler came to me.

"We put the building on lockdown," he explained. "No one can get in-- and no one can get out."

"Are you crazy?" I cried. "People will die, including me!"

"You don't know why you're president, do you?" he asked. "The government was worried you would leak the files you accessed, so they made you the president as a coverup."

"I bet they didn't expect this, did they?" I shouted angrily.

"It's not like it matters--you're just a kid. It's probably better for the government anyway like this." My butler grinned evilly.

"You're going to die too, psychopath!" I explained.

"Not necessarily." He squeezed through the window and landed perfectly on the ground. I would have done the same thing, but I was scared of heights. I panicked and ran around the building looking for people to help me. I was the only one left inside the White House. My phone rang.

"Mr. President," a mysterious voice said on the other line.

"The name's Jackson," I grunted, knowing I wouldn't be president much longer.

"Mr. President," the voice repeated. "We are terrorists. We will not engage firepower if you answer this simple question correctly."

"Terrorists? I had no idea," I said.

"Don't get sarcastic," he was getting impatient now. "Just answer the question."

"I'm waiting for you to tell me," I was starting to grow angry with these villains.

"I'll cut to the chase," he said. "What's nine times four? You have ten seconds."

He had to be kidding. It was the one problem I couldn't figure out on my math homework. There wasn't enough time for me to grab a calculator. I had to solve it in my head.

"Thirty-five." I took my best guess.

"Wrong!" the terrorist cackled with glee.

"It's not like you wouldn't have blown me to smithereens anyway," I muttered.

Suddenly the ground shook underneath me. My phone flew out of my hand.

"No!" I cried. I lunged for the device. It was a bad move on my part. The White House had split into two pieces, and I fell and was caught in between them. It was worse than an earthquake. I had hoisted my body into the air. Not learning my lesson, I reached back towards my phone again. An explosion caused me to blast a hundred feet in the air. My ribs smashed into the side of the building, but there was nothing broken. There were multiple explosions from the bottom, which shifted the White House sideways. "Shouldn't they make these kinds of places a bit more sturdy?" I turned around. There were machine guns fixed on me. "Don't shoot!" I cried. I heard multiple shots go off around me. I slammed my eyes shut.

I woke up. I was somewhere comfortable. Something was strange. The bed felt like my own bed.

"Is this heaven?" I asked. Master Yoda greeted me.

"Heaven, you are in," Master Yoda croaked. "The ways of the force, I will teach you."

"You're not Master Yoda," I concluded. "You're... you're my little brother!" Then it hit me. "Is it still Halloween? How long have I been sleeping?"

"Relax, bro," he chuckled through his Yoda mask. "You have ten minutes before we go trick-or-treating."

Phew. It was all just a dream. There are still things I have no clue about, like how to graph a linear equation or how to draw. But there is one thing I know for sure: nine times four equals thirty-six.

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**“Dr. Benjamin Benson, M.D.”**  
by Lydia Spicer  
3<sup>rd</sup> Place, Short Story 10-12

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55-015/10-12

Dr. Benjamin Benson, M.D. 1

Dr. Benjamin Benson, M.D.

An apple a day keeps the doctor away--perhaps a better way of phrasing this would be an apple a day keeps you away from the doctor. That one friend we all have who takes everything literally might become confused. Today we travel into the mind of that ultra-literal person to look at those fleeting images of an apple, a patient, and, of course, a very peculiar doctor.

Matthew Watson awoke at six o'clock on the most normal of normal mornings. He showered, dressed, and poured himself a mug of cheap-tasting instant coffee. As he raised the cup to his lips, he heard a polite knock on the door. He looked through the peephole and saw the rounded shape of what seemed to be a solicitor. He turned back to his coffee, hoping the man would think there was nobody home.

Then there were several light knocks in rapid succession. Matthew sighed and sipped. Finally, the man pressed repeatedly on the doorbell like a child at play.

Ding-ding-ding-ding-ding-ding-ding-dooonngg!

Matthew's right eye twitched. He opened the door. "No solici--" he began to say, but he stopped short at the sight of the figure in front of him.

The man was very short, very plump, and wore a white doctor's coat. Bright, ever-staring, never-blinking brown eyes looked expectantly into Matthew's. A smile in the shape of a "U" was glued right above his double chin. Before Matthew had the chance to say another word, the man stepped in, shuffled past him, and looked all around in an admiring way.

"Very nice, very nice indeed," he muttered to himself. "I think I'm going to enjoy this," he said, turning to Matthew. "I am Dr. Benjamin Benson. I have an M.D. in care for the average human. You may call me Dr. B." With that he planted himself at the kitchen table.



Matthew gulped down the rest of his coffee. "I have to go to work," he said. "I think it would be better for both of us if you came with me." The thought of leaving a person such as this to his own devices made him wince.

"Oh!" Dr. Benson said, bouncing up and down in his chair. "I love automobile rides!"

He leapt up on his two duck feet and raced out into the garage. He was in the driver's seat before Matthew had time to open the garage door.

"It's all right, I know where you work," said the doctor. They sped off down the street, Doctor Benson squealing with excitement, Matthew groping frantically for the roof handle.

"It is most likely the case that you are in a confused state and have many queries," Dr. Benson said. "I am not an alien, a ghost, or a hallucination. And also, we are going directly to your office, and any attempts at bringing me in contact with the police will be thwarted indefinitely. Any other questions?" he said as he looked at Matthew, his grip on the steering wheel slackening slightly.

"Just drive," said Matthew hollowly.

All day Matthew tried to focus on his work, but shock and dreamlike perplexity had rusted the gears in his brain. All night Matthew tried to sleep, but the strange doctor engaged him in small talk every time he closed his eyes.

The next morning, Matthew tried working from home. He desperately pitted himself against the small yet maddening noises Dr. Benson made. He was playing with his medical instruments while humming a tuneless song as his feet tap-danced under the table. Occasionally a stethoscope or some other metal tool would fall to the hardwood floor with a crash. Around noon the doctor spoke.

“I suppose you’re wanting a clue as to how you can be rid of me.”

Matthew jerked his head up and nodded.

“Very well,” said Dr. Benson. “Think of a phrase your mother told you when you were a child to keep you healthy.” But Matthew could no longer think. He slammed his head against the table.

“Oh, dear,” Dr. Benson said. He bit his lip, and for once his silly smile dampened. “That will never do.” Then a grin brightened his face. “I have another clue for you. Go to the supermarket!” Triumph lit his every feature as he pelted off to the car with Matthew following sullenly behind.

As they perused the many aisles, Matthew began to realize how enormous a supermarket really was. Dr. Benson shuffled along, sticking to his side like gum to the sole of a shoe. Hot embarrassment crept up his neck as people stared at the astonishing doctor and then at him. The weary patient stopped at random and held up a carrot.

“Is this what you want?” he said.

“Thank you,” Dr. Benson replied, taking it and chomping off a sizable chunk. “But unfortunately, not what I’m looking for, or should I say, what *you’re* looking for.” He giggled with the self-satisfaction of a child.

Matthew ransacked the store, offering anything from oranges and tomatoes to zucchinis and celery. At last, he had tried every fruit and vegetable that could possibly drive the doctor away. When he felt like wringing his own neck from sheer frustration, he saw something sitting in a large box which just might work. Simple, yes, and generic. But it just might work.

He dragged himself over to the crate and plucked out a small apple that shined with a reddish gleam. He placed it in Dr. Benson's pudgy palm. The doctor, instead of munching on it as he had done with every other food item, handed it back.

"You want me to eat it?" Matthew said. Dr. Benson did not answer. Matthew took a bite. Nothing happened. He took bite after bite after bite until there was nothing left but the core.

"It's been fun," Dr. Benson said. "Congratulations!" With a loud belch, he turned and walked out the automatic glass doors, across the parking lot, and back to who knows where he came from. Matthew paid the expense of a bag of apples for himself, as well as all the food the doctor had consumed, then went home.

His breakfast was interrupted the next day with a knock on the door. He looked out the peephole and saw Dr. Benson with his white coat and unwavering smile. Matthew opened the door, and Dr. Benson spoke.

"You know what I want."

Matthew retrieved an apple and started eating. With each bite, the doctor took one miniscule step away. Soon, a skimpy core was all that was left. Dr. Benson turned tail and ran like a roller coaster down the street. A prescription card fluttered in his wake. Matthew picked it up and read the words that his mother had so often told him when he was a child:

*An apple a day keeps the doctor away.*