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Letter from the Editor

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

My GPA is bad.

I don't mean for that to imply I'm failing out, that I'm sitting in some lamp-lit room on the upper floor of DiGS with the Assistant Dean to Dean of Assistants speaking all soft and slow and stern about my "other available opportunities." I just mean I'm not as happy with my professional life as I could be. And I'm not as eager to have a perfect record because *man*, you don't want to play into *the system, man*, that's what they want! It doesn't make any sense. I love learning but want to bottle all that learning inside until I can impress hypothetical grandchildren with direct quotations from Southern Gothic literature. I'll feel all good and fancy about myself, but they'll say "Grandpa's experiencing his hallucinations again!" and go back to jacking in to their VR cyberspace worldwideweb mincraft endorphin shooters freetoplays. Don't make me write papers on the things I love.

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Summit Middle School separated their graduating classes in half. In sixth grade, students became either Bears or Dragons. Every group throughout the three years of service had a cutesy name and a half-cooked sense of identity. This was all a front, of course, perhaps driven by some legislation I knew and know nothing about, to teach A.P., or Advanced Placement, courses to the gifted few students who exhibited intellectual prowess. Perhaps there is a good argument to be made for challenging a middle school's most college-ready students, but Summit's problem was that instead of reserving advanced classes for a mere ten percent, or even twenty-five percent, of the student body, they made their cut at fifty percent. Fifty percent of Summit Middle School's graduating class was destined for greatness. The other half were as dumb as bricks.

Well, I was a Bear. And that meant I was as dumb as a brick.

See, the Dragons didn't just get a nice little perk at the end of the same long day. Their entire lives were formed differently. They had different teachers, they went to different classes, they

never interacted with the Bears, and they developed an air of snootiness and becoming adulthood. In the eighth grade, at the end of a long tenure at Summit, Bears were gifted the opportunity of testing in hopes they, even with their inferior resources, would be on the level of Advanced Placement courses once they moved across the street to Homestead High School. I was one of the Bears tested. And like every single other Bear in that cramped closet two hours after we should have already been home, I failed. Because nature is stronger than nurture, I supposed, and because none of us were nurtured so it obviously wasn't any good.

I do not intend for this lovely introduction to our wonderful book to be a downer, but I have lived with this resentment for a long time. Only recently did I sit in Winthrop's Writing Center and feel a little bit of blood rush cold under my skin when a tutor who has been a wonderful friend to me in the past mentioned that she was, more or less, a Dragon. This is all silliness. It all passes once you attend college or you reach the ripe old age of a quarter-century. Many Bears finally reach Dragonhood, many Dragons lower themselves to Beardom, but more than any of this, these creatures become complete, rounded people, identified not by cute team names but by the quality and content of their character created through the awful circumstance given to them by their middle schools. We are all past yet the effects still linger.

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The only education I really received, the only kind I cared about, specifically because it wasn't diluted from God's give-and-take system, was found with an internet connection and a library card. When I should have been reading some lukewarm young adult novel I could really "connect" to, I let the book grow mold at the bottom of my backpack and read *Les Misérables* instead. When I should have been filling in some handout from chemistry, I went to parties with my friends and I spent my allowance on the straight-to-DVD Blockbuster bargain bin and played the dumbest video games I could find until the controller's buttons broke because to a Bear you had to be either better than a Dragon or be away from the school system altogether.

This year's Anthology is a collection of found material. Some pieces could be found in the front of a Norton Critical Edition. Others could be a pretty pattern found at the bottom of a leaking trash bag. Some could hang in national galleries and sell for seven figures. Others could be cute ideas that get second billing in fifteen-cent pulp magazines. They are all collected here as little pieces of what makes us tick, whatever they may be (perhaps they all hold significance to us, all at once). They let us all leave Summit Middle School with our pride intact and guided our bodies towards some future where the high art and the low art are just art and the Dragons and the Bears are just people. There is no pretense of objectivity here. This year's Anthology is different from Anthologies of years past and years future. Each edition is a special mixture made through pulling together six people into one little office and asking them just what they like about their lives. The Winthrop community provides their own unique ingredients, and then we have this book. I hope it does you justice.

The 2015 Anthology welcomes everyone, but this year is especially dedicated to the Bears and all Bear-like equivalents. Whether you set your goals too high or too low, whether you were ever pigeonholed and left to rot by others or by yourself, let this Anthology be a safe home for you. Your GPA will always look good to me.

Patrick Kay
Editor-in-Chief