

Inspired by the writing style of Sandra Cisneros in her *The House on Mango Street*, Ms. McCafferty's seventh graders wrote the following vignettes. These students worked on their *word choice* and *voice* skills as they created the final drafts you see below. With a friend, read over each of these vignettes and discuss where you see the best evidence of *word choice* and *voice* in each piece.



### **Converse**

by Kylie, seventh grade writer

My favorite shoes so old, but very new. Laughing, because they're being tickled by the grass I walk on. Crying, because I didn't wear them today. Worthless, but treated as if they are priceless. As worn as old leather. Sad, if I'm mad. They feel me. We have fun. Especially in the sun. Molded to my feet like my footprint in the sand.

Old and worn out, the color is fading. I put them away. Longing to be worn once more. They call my name, but I don't listen. Feeling old and worthless, they wait. And wait. Sleeping. Opening eyes at the dim rays of light. Hoping, wishing, and praying, that someone will wear them once more. One more walk. One more dip in the mud. One more walk on the beach. One more taste of the sweet grass. Hoping, but being let down again and again. Sleeping once more, only to be awakened and let down again. Once sad. Once mad. Can no longer feel until awakened by a human soul. Longing for that feeling again.



### **The Passing**

by Erin, seventh grade writer

As each kid gets older, it's passed down. Passed down like a family heirloom, but not like an antique, not safe and not kept. The size 4 soccer ball has been on many feet, been on many fields, been to many places. It rolls on the grass. It sits in the garage. It has its owner. And as soon as it gets used to its owner, it is passed down yet again.

How many times has it seen the back of the net? Felt the nylon rope on its back? Hear the crowd go wild in joy? Back and forth across the field. Up and down. Side to side. Net to net. Passed down from brother to sister, and now from sister to sister. The soccer ball is trustworthy. It's a life-long companion, so why must it be passed down?

As children get older, its mind gets colder. It begins to feel good on the children's feet, like an old pair of tennis shoes. And like the tennis shoes, it's passed down. To another pair of feet. And another team to beat. They claim that they must use a size 5 at the age of thirteen. A ball that's bigger, stronger, more powerful. Then, slowly, shyly, shamelessly, the size 4 moves on. Moves on to another set of feet. Moves on to different fields. Moves on to different owners. And when the cycle is complete, when it has gotten used to the new owner, and the new fields, the soccer ball is passed down once more.



---

## **The One Who Waits**

by Nathan, seventh grade writer

The old Chicago elementary school. Once priceless to all who passed through its doors, though now treated as worthless. Desperately longing for someone to open its doors once again. To stay for just a while, and take their time to wander its empty halls. Now retired to the dusty abandoned streets of downtown Chicago, it hears the cars pass by every so often. It longs like a homeless man's pocket, waiting for it to be filled once again, but the hope is always in vain.

Something so big, yet is treated as so small that nobody seems to notice it. The walls of the abandoned school ache like the stomachs of starving children in Africa. The school's long hallways are like a mother's outstretched arms, waiting for her missing child to fill them again. *Just* one more time.

The old school's windows are an old man's lungs yearning for his oxygen. The hallway floors still marked with handprints, hope for the hurried footsteps of the happy children to massage it once again. Quietly it wishes for the children's laughter to tickle its crevices with wads of chewed gum and silly notes written on little pieces of paper. The old school sighs and creaks, cries with the rain, and sleeps in the sun, and waits, just in case.



---

## **Three Short Vignettes**

by Mackenzie, seventh grade writer

### The Tree

Outside, the leaves are shining in the sun. Its height, not quite one hundred and one. The trunk is like a castle's wall. This tree as brave as a knight so tall. It has the heart of one thousand men. Through the thirteenth century and back again.

### The Battle

With a boom, crash, and a bang, the soldier's gun barrel sang. The sound was that of an attacking gang. This rifle is the beast of all feuds. Its temperature reaching one hundred and two. Steam stood stiffly in the air. Its holder free of wear and tear.

### Gvm Shorts

Sweaty, sweet, smelly, still. The stench was enough for each nostril to fill. For the shorts just hung like drippings on a grill. The smell was that of a scream so shrill. The uniform yelled, "Please, help me, please!" the locker was closed just like the breeze. Sweaty, sweet, smelly, still. The stench was enough for each nostril to fill.