

Letters About Literature 2005

A reading and writing promotion program of the
Center for the Book in the Library of Congress
Presented in partnership with Target



Celebrating Six National Winners *Applauding 47,000 remarkable letters!*

In 2005, 47,000 young readers entered this annual writing contest. More than 150 readers won state prizes. On this page and the next, meet the six national winners!

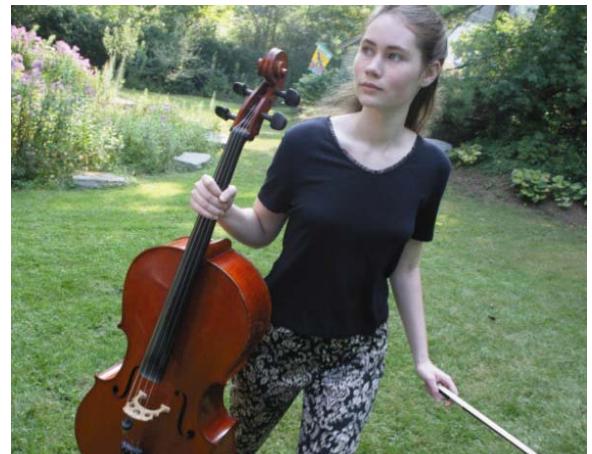


Mitchell Deck, Peoria, IL (Level I)

It was Mitchell's love of baseball that motivated him to read *Lou Gehrig, Pride of the Yankees*. But it was discovering a deeper connection with Gehrig that really made the book meaningful to him. In the letter he wrote, Mitchell said he was relieved to learn that when Lou was a boy other kids sometimes picked on him. *Since I am small, sometimes it is hard for me to play sports and compete*, Mitchell wrote. *Lou Gehrig makes me realize that if I try hard, people will see that I can do things that they think I cannot.*

Hannah Danielle Pierce, Radford, VA (Level III)

Hannah reads a lot of books, but none of them has ever meant as much to her as *The Wasting Game*. A murder mystery with characters she adored, this was the first book to make Hannah cry. *Turtle came inside me as I read and has never left*, Hannah wrote. *Having her as part of me has transformed a shy, timid girl whose best friends were books into a bright, friendly personality.* By the way, books are still Hannah's friends.



Gabe Goodman, Greeley, CO (Level II)



Gabe isn't sure whether his little brother Ben will ever understand how much he really loves him. But after reading *Stuck in Neutral*, a novel about a boy with cerebral palsy, he thinks he might. In his letter, Gabe explained how Ben was diagnosed with autism at age three. Although he loves Ben, sometimes it has been hard to live with him. *Stuck in Neutral* helped Gabe to feel closer to Ben than ever before.

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Edward Chen, Ames, IA (Level III)

What struck Edward about Albert Camus's philosophical novel, *The Stranger*, was the main character. Meursault is a man who walked gently through life instead of *seeing* it, Edward wrote. *I profoundly pitied him.* And yet, Meursault gave Edward an important insight to his own life: *I did not want to be Meursault. To have a life of depth, meaning and intensity, I must take the initiative to lift up my soul in times of anguish.*



Latricia Hampton, Junction City, OR (Level I)

"Hopeless" and "grim" were two words that this eleven-year-old girl used to describe her life *before* reading David Pelzer's book *A Child Called It*. When you have been through tough times in life, it helps to know that others have been there, too. In her letter to David, Latricia said that his story helped to let go of the past and believe in herself and the future. *You showed me that I had a voice that I never knew I had. It was the voice of my own thoughts.* It didn't happen right away, said Latricia, but slowly her feelings of hopelessness went away.

Amy Tai, Tulsa, OK (Level II)

Amy used to think her mom was picking on her when she said things like study hard and don't use so much hot water. *The Joy Luck Club* changed her mind. Until she read about the four families living in pre-World War II China, Amy wrote in her letter, she had no real understanding of the hardships her mother and her grandmother had endured. *It seems hard to imagine my mom as a child, but the members of the Joy Luck Club helped me do so, she wrote. A daughter's trust towards her mother should be as strong as the mother's love.*

