

NEW BEGINNINGS



“A bridge of silver wings stretches
from the dead ashes of an
unforgiving nightmare
to the jeweled vision of a life started
anew.”

— Aberjhani

CAYEY STUDENTS WRITE

NEW BEGINNINGS

NEW BEGINNINGS EDITION

PAPER CHIMNEY: EVERY DAY IS A NEW YEAR

By: Kevin Román Candelaria & Alejandra I. Rodríguez Quiñones

A few weeks ago we all welcomed at the comfort of our homes the beginning of a brand new year. We celebrated with our families and enjoyed the wonderful noise of all of the fireworks being projected on the skies above us. We're pretty sure that at least a few of us might have received a visit from the police due to a noise complaint from that one grumpy neighbor everybody has, but none the less we're sure we all had a great time saying hello to 2016.

Now, what is it about that 31st of December and that 1st of January that gets us all so excited? Why do we get so excited about saying goodbye to a passing year and hello

to a new one? What does that first day of January have that no other day has? Let's see if we can find some answers.

"FOR LAST YEAR'S WORDS BELONG TO LAST YEAR'S LANGUAGE AND NEXT YEAR'S WORDS AWAIT ANOTHER VOICE. AND TO MAKE AN END IS TO MAKE A BEGINNING." T. S. ELLIOT

For a lot of us, a new year represents a new beginning, a new start and maybe even a new us; it may represent an opportunity to change the things we want to change. An opportunity to write down a whole new list of resolutions. A chance to start again.

That's an amazing way to see a new year! BUT, why do we bind ourselves to just one day? Why do we have to wait until the very first day of a new year to decide to make a list of the things we want to change?

If we really think about it, the 1st of January, we wake up just like we wake up any other day of the year, consequently we could say that the first of January is just like any other day.

The things we might've done; our mistakes are not going to magically disappear when the clock strikes 12:00, that first day of a new year, just like that! They aren't going to disappear any other day of the year either.

What we're trying to say is, that each day is a brand new start, each night represents an ending and each morning a new beginning. We all have

the opportunity each and every day of the year to work towards the things we want to achieve. So let's not wait an entire year to make a list of the

things we want to change and let's start making changes, even if it's just a little bit at a time. Make *Every Day a New Year!*

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THE EPIPHANY

BY: JOSMAIRA LOZADA



I never thought I had to make it all the way to the other side of the world just to realize that pain is everywhere. My first weekend in Italy was spent in Venice. That morning I left my apartment knowing that I would not be the same.

On that morning, before we left, I couldn't contain my excitement. It was a dream come true, after all. I could only think about how proud of myself I was. I made it before I turned 21. *Gondola, you are mine*, was my only thought as we waited at the bus stop that morning, anxious for it to arrive and take us to all the happiness there was in store.

I listened to the constant chatter of my Italian neighbors. You would think I would have grown accustomed to the sound already, instead I loved every syllable and every roll of the tongue that came out of my Italian friends enticing accents. You would have guessed that "*Oh, mama mia!*" would make you laugh due to all of the Italian parodies you have heard in films, but no, this turns into a beautiful expression of culture.

So as me and my friend stepped onto the bus, though it was early in the morning, and the sleepiness was present, the excitement was high and almost palpable all around. Despite the jittering anticipation of the events to come, we still

managed to sleep. It wasn't easy though, I did not want to miss a second of the sights and cities we would pass on our way.

Once we reached the gondola, we were met by the rain. An unfortunate delay, but I was not going to let this ruin my spirit. I'd waited 20 years to be here, and my dreams were going to come true, whether I was carrying an umbrella or not. After a few hours of dosing and waiting for the weather to come around, I had grown tired of the anticipation. For my journey of self-realization to begin. Little did I know this feeling was not going to come from riding a gondola, Venice had a surprise for me.

We abandoned our hopes of riding the gondola for the time being, for the weather didn't seem to be letting up any time soon. So, we took our journey elsewhere. We walked around the rain soaked streets of Venice, looking for the adventure. In search of whatever it was that I was looking for.

Then, it was there on bench in *Piazza San Marco Venezia* where I saw her cry. While she talked on the phone with a bottle of wine in her hand. This was not exactly what I had in mind when I thought of my adventure in Italy. A selfish thought I know, but Venice was supposed to be a happy place filled with smiling people, not this. She was supposed to be happy, we are in Venice!

My friends all surround me smiling, laughing and simply sitting on this bench. But not me. I wasn't smiling. I couldn't. And it was because of this woman. Because of sadness so clearly expressed on her face. My friend being oblivious to all of this, didn't seem to notice the emotion stirring inside of me. It was alright though. I was the one who had to learn this lesson, not anyone else. So I continued to question, why did she cry?

I turn my attention to the immensity of people who were there in Venice that day. I paid attention to what was going on around me and listened to the abundance of language all spoken at the same time, conversations overlapping each other. There are all kinds of people here, all of them unknown to me.

Then, past all of these people, I look back at the woman in tears and came to the realization that her pain is here because pain is everywhere, and we are united by this feeling.

It is something we all know and come to live with despite it. Sometimes when you are born in such a small island like Puerto Rico, we see our happiness far from here, we will study and get out of here because the grass is 'greener on the other side', as they say. That is not my truth anymore.

Italy taught me to love Puerto Rico, because my grass has to be green on this side too. In other words, you don't have to travel to be happy, be happy and travel. New beginnings happen in a matter of seconds. So I urge you: don't miss out, because those beginnings will change everything.

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REFLECTIONS UPON NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

BY: VALERIA MELENDEZ

The clock strikes twelve. Fireworks go off. This scenario is all too familiar; it's the beginning of the year! This event is, of course, always accompanied by the inevitable "New Year's Resolution": "This year I'm going to: do yoga, exercise, eat healthy, lose weight, and read more books". We've all heard these propositions far too many times. So many times, in fact, that we know exactly how it's going to play out in the end; these resolutions will never be accomplished. This is the disappointing truth. If they were truly committed to a '*new beginning*', this could've been initiated at any given time of the year regardless of the time or date.

Why do so many people insist on waiting for January 1st to begin their new propositioned lifestyle? The answer is simple. For many people, January 1st is symbolic. It represents a "fresh start", a "clean slate". Since it is, of course, the first day of the New Year. What better place to start than the beginning? However, for many others, January 1st is an excuse to postpone what they have proposed to themselves throughout the year time and time again.

Of course, once the '*new year*' begins, many of these proposed resolutions do begin to occur. People start going to the gym, doing yoga, and making conscious decisions to eat healthy. However, the truth is, that within a few short weeks: they'll skip a day of yoga, they'll desert the gym, and they'll cheat on their diet. Before they know it, they've stopped practicing these activities all together and reverted back to the person they had sworn to leave behind in the previous year. But it doesn't matter, because there will be another January 1st, so then the mentality sets in: "I'll try again next year".

Why must they limit improving and modifying themselves to one single day of the year? New beginnings do not start when the clock strikes twelve. New beginnings do not start when the fireworks go off. New beginnings start with you and your determination to improve regardless of the time of the year. If you cannot find this determination on June 12th, November 3rd, or any other day of the year... it is likely you will not find it in January 1st as well.

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THE CALENDAR

BY: DENISE MORALES SOTO

It's a strange experience, staring down at your own grave. Looking down at your name carved eternally into stone. Well, not really eternally. It will fade over time. Erode with the rain and the dirt. But it does seem rather final. It definitely looks like an end. I guess it's mostly poetic than it is practical. Think of what we could do with all of this land if we hadn't designated it for the dead, but my train of thought is drifting.

Dying. It's a very unique experience that I don't think I could properly explain. It's not exactly painless, but not painful either. It's as if you were feeling something that's happening to somebody else. Or the memory of something painful. It's dull and you can kind of feel it, and you know that it hurt a lot at some point, but you can't replicate the exact experience. That's kind of what dying is. But *death*, that's a whole other story.

It's... *freeing*. That's the closest way I can describe it.

You feel lighter. Not only has the weight of your physical body left you, but all of the burden of living. The thoughts, the worries, the anxieties, you leave those all behind when you die, and it is the most amazing feeling. You feel so light it's like you could float all the way to space. You can finally fly, you are free, in the truest and purest sense of the word.

You are at peace, you are happy, and yet... I can't help but miss it. Living. Breathing. Feeling.

Feeling isn't the same when you're dead. It's not as... intense. Not as passionate. Not as real. Not the pain or the sadness, but not the happiness or excitement either. Or love. I cannot feel any of these things anymore, not in the same way, but I can remember them.

I can remember the rush of having a crush on someone, the pit in your stomach when you're nervous about something. The joy so intense that you begin to cry. The butterflies that grow in your stomach when someone compliments you, or the fireworks that erupt inside when someone hugs you or holds your hand. Those are all things that you need to be alive to feel, and while I do not miss the headache that comes after hours of crying, or the anger that is so real it feels like a fire has been set inside of you. Or being hurt in general; physically, mentally or emotionally. No, I don't miss that at all. I don't think anyone does. But those memories aren't as clear as the other ones. The beautiful ones, the happy ones. Those are the ones I yearn to relive. To feel again.

Dying is so much easier. It's more bearable, it's even better than living when you really think about it. When you weigh the pros and the cons, there are more pros to death than to life, but still. There is no rational way I could explain this. I don't think anyone could. No person living or dead could explain how horrible living is, or how wonderful it can be. It is the one truest adventure. Even if you feel like you haven't done anything, in reality you have accomplished so much. You made it, you were born. You took your first breath and you survived long after it. It's something that has no equal.

All that you do, all that you have survived, fought through. All the things that you experience and feel and love. It's all so worth it, even if it never feels like it at the time. Or ever. Even if the first time you realize this is after you are long gone.

It really is a gift, living. You'll want to do it again, no matter how horrific it was the first time. Or the time after that, or the time after that. I speak from experience.

A gentle hand softly rests on my shoulder. I was so lost in my thoughts I hadn't heard anyone come. I turn around to find a pair of warm brown eyes staring back at me. She smiles down at me and I feel like a child as she towers several inches over me, but she is in no way intimidating. She is quite the opposite, actually. With her honey colored hair, and how the corners of her eyes have wrinkled from smiling so much. She is what I imagine a hug would look like if it were a person. "Sorry for startling you," she said, still smiling.

I shook my head. "You didn't."

"Good," she said, a hint of humor in her voice, as if this exchange were very amusing. Maybe it is. I wouldn't know. Humor is also a thing you have to learn to understand again after you die.

"Are you ready?" she asks me, her voice deep, while also sounding very sweet and comforting. Like melting chocolate.

I look back at my grave. My name. My ending. My one life over. I took a deep breath then turned my attention back to my Guardian Angel and nodded. "Yes. I'm ready."

"Then come with me," she said offering me her hand.

I took it without hesitation and she began to guide me away from my past self.

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There is so much noise. People talking over each other, some are even screaming. Words of encouragement are being shouted from all corners of the room. I don't really know what's going on. The sounds are much sharper, and clearer than I am used to.

The first thing I feel are a pair of cold, rubbery gloved hands picking me up. The screaming has stopped now. That's good. It was a bit unsettling.

The gloved hand smacks me in the bum. Air fills up my lungs as I begin to cry. I have never felt this before, but I know its pain. I don't like it. The gloved hands (which I've decided I don't like either) carry me somewhere else and hand me towards someone.

A pair of arms begin to cradle me. They are warm and soft, and I fit perfectly in them. They nestle me closer to them and I can hear a heartbeat. Whoever they belong to, I can feel them crying now. I hope the gloved person didn't smack them too.

I like this person. The one who is holding me.

Between tears she says the sweetest things. There is another voice too. It's closer than it was before. I feel a hand stroking my sticky forehead, removing the gunk that was there. I like that person, too. Their hands are also soft and warm. They make me feel happy.

I have stopped crying now. I feel safe in this strange place now. I feel comfort. I feel good.

I open my eyes for the first time, again.

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AN IMPERIA AFFLICTION

By: Anonymous

Reading slumps... we've all been there. It's been two weeks. You haven't read more than a page. Your books are looking at you reproachfully. Yet you find yourself re-watching the same four episodes of *Supernatural* so many times that you start to feel an uncontrollable urge to join an online debate about the effects of Cristian, infographics, and pagan elements on modern day popular media creations. And you don't want that. Nobody wants that. Not really. What you really want, is to be able to lose yourself in the throes of literature without having it feel

like a chore. But when you find yourself as a victim of this dreaded affliction we call a 'reading slump', that is just not going to happen.

“WHEN YOU'RE IN A
SLUMP,
YOU'RE NOT IN FOR MUCH
FUN.
UN-SLUMPING YOURSELF
IS NOT EASILY DONE.”

— DR. SEUSS, OH, THE
PLACES YOU'LL GO!

A reading slump, as established by present day colloquialisms and YouTube, is a state of mind in which you literally just can't read. Symptoms include (but

are not limited to): a never-ending pile of books to be read that for some reason, you keep adding to. A sudden urge to organize your bookshelf and catalogue every book you own- I mean you can't just read *The Handmaiden's Tale* when your brand new illustrated copy of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* is not sitting in a place of honor. You will also begin to wonder if you can be diagnosed with ADHD since you can't seem to sit still whenever you pick up a book.

For the past year and a half I've been trying to break out of this slump. So far I've failed with every attempt. I've tried

reading new books, old books, small books, large books, comic books, and coloring books all for naught. This consistent failure has had me spiraling into an endless pit of despair. You may think I'm being a tad hyperbolic, dramatic even. Here's the thing: to me reading is more than just a hobby, more than light diversion. I read for comfort, pleasure, and enlightenment. Basic human needs that should *not* be neglected.

Books hold the most tender and vulnerable parts of my person; my belief in meaning and significance, and how I

identify with others. It allows me the sense of intelligence at work, and a feeling of beauty, insight, solidarity, and shared dreams with those who also find themselves sifting through pages.

That is why reading slumps are so miserable and foreboding. It's like a piece of my soul has been lost amongst the unopened pages.

This year I'm determined to get out of this depressing slump and deserve the title of 'bookworm' I was bestowed in elementary school. I've taken the GoodReads 2016 *Around the Year in 52 Books* reading

challenge. The challenge, as its name suggests, consist of 52 creative and interesting ways to tackle your to be read pile and conquer that fiendish reading slump.

As of the writing of this, I've tackled two of the challenges: "*A book by an author you discovered in 2015*" and "*Things that go bump in the night*". Hopefully this will cure my present state and free my mind to once again enjoy one of the best things in life.

Remember, reading isn't a waste of time. It's a waste of time not to.

BOOK OF THE MONTH

What you should read!

It's a new year, it's a new you! You say to yourself: "Hey, I want to read more books this year! But where do I begin?" Worry not my dear friend, for Sigma Tau Delta has got you covered! Here are five books that you should think about picking up in 2016 and why!



1. **Jane Eyre**

by **Charlotte Bronte.**

This is a classic, and you know you've been meaning to read more classics! Here is your chance. And the timing couldn't be better, because this year is Charlotte Bronte's 100th birthday! What a coincidence! What better way to celebrate a literary legend's 100th birthday than by reading her work?

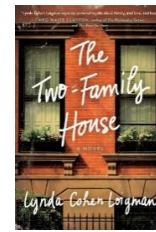


2. **Towers**

Falling by Jewell Parker Rhodes. Okay

so, you've got your classic. Now let's go for something a bit more modern, but just as important. This is a 2016 release that comes out in June. It is a middle grade story, written by an African American author about the tragedy of 9/11, told by the perspective of a young African American girl and how that one event impacted her, her family, and her life. I put this one in here because it is important for you as a reader to read diversely and to read about things like this, especially if it happened in your lifetime. Don't let the fact that it is a middle grade fool

you. Books aimed for children are often times better than the ones written for adults. So keep your eyes peeled for this release.



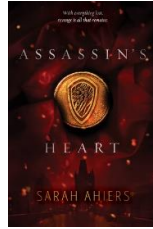
3. **The Two-**

Family House by Lynda Cohen

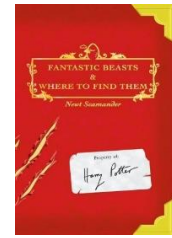
Loigman. Let's be honest now, we all want to be that person that reads the books that are revered by all the fancy people and wins all of the awards. The ones that people talk about how deep and transcendental it is. Those books that most people won't pick up, because they are too big, too wordy, and don't have a paranormal love story subplot. If this is the case, I've got you covered as

well. This is a historical fiction novel set in Brooklyn in 1947 about these two girls who are born minutes apart from each other in a two-family brownstone, to two different women. They are sisters by marriage and form a *seemingly* impervious bond forged before and during that night; but as the years progress, cracks begin to appear and their relationship begins to unravel, not entirely knowing why or how to stop it from happening. "One misguided choice; one moment of tragedy. Heartbreak wars with happiness and almost but not quite wins." You have to admit, that sounds pretty awesome. This novel comes out on March 8th of this year, so consider picking up this book, and you can fall in love with this it and brag

about it, before it was cool.



4. **Assassin's Heart by Sarah Ahiers.** After reading all of those heavy, life changing books, you want something a little less heart breaking and a lot more awesome. *Assassin's Heart* is the first book in a new Young Adult fantasy series about assassins. I mean, what more do you need? Its assassins. But if that hasn't convinced you, this book is described as "The Godfather with shades of Romeo and Juliet". Come on. This sounds epic. This book comes out on February 2nd and you should read it. I know I will.



5. **Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them by J.K Rowling.** As you may be aware (or not, depending on whether you live anywhere near an internet connection), this book is kind of a spin off to the Harry Potter series and it is being turned into a movie this year. Not only that, but the script was written by J.K Rowling *herself*. The movie comes out November 18th, so, this is me giving you the chance to have read the book before the movie. You're welcome.

So there you have it folks! An amazing list of awesome books that you should definitely pick up this year. It'll be good for you, and who knows? Your new favorite book may very well be amongst these titles.



English Week

March 14th - 18th



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Issue: January/February 2016

New Beginnings Edition

Sigma Tau Delta: Cayey Students Write

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