student judges
Caitlin Neely, Kaitlin Mills and Ranee Stemann

editors
Dr. Janel Bloch’s Spring 2013 “Traditional Grammar” students
Dr. Janel Bloch, Department of English

on the cover
Author Kelsey Timmerman

supported by
Northern Kentucky University
Department of English
Office of First-Year Programs
Highland Heights, Kentucky 41099

Copyright 2013
It’s my pleasure to introduce the winners of the 2013 Book Connection Writing/Visual Art contest. First, here’s a little context on our program. A program that began in 2000, the Book Connection features one book and invites more than 1,000 first-year students to engage in a shared reading experience. Each year, the book is selected by a committee of faculty and staff, and the author is invited to participate in conversations with first-year students. At the same time, faculty from such courses as UNV 101 and ENG 101 assign readings and projects related to the book.

This year’s book was Where Am I Wearing?, by Kelsey Timmerman. Here’s a quick summary: “From a 20-something t-shirt maker in Honduras to a single mother of two in Bangladesh, Timmerman humanizes the issues of glocalization, intimately describing the connection between impoverished garment workers’ standards of living and the all-American material lifestyle, bridging the gap between global producers and consumers.”

Timmerman doesn’t humanize these issues solely through words. When visiting last October for our Book Connection Conversations, he started with a question: Where Am I Wearing?, Psst: Check your shirt tag.

Timmerman spoke to two packed houses about the value of going glocal, exploitation vs. opportunity, modern slavery, and how traveling can augment your college experiences. He indeed left us thinking, and checking our tags more often.

To build on Timmerman’s book and his visit to NKU last fall, the Office of First-Year Programs sponsored a student writing/visual art contest, inviting students to respond to the themes and message of Where Am I Wearing?. We held an early deadline in October, and in December. As you can see here, Timmerman had a chance to meet and have dinner with winners of our October deadline.

This year’s Book Connection contest were judged by editors of Loch Norse magazine, then edited by Dr. Janel Bloch’s course “Professional Editing in the Workplace.” When reviewing the submissions, the editors were focused on students who best demonstrated insight, creativity, critical thinking, and engagement with the book. They said such things as: “There were a lot of interesting elements. Each piece stood for something, and we liked the idea that beauty can be found in poverty.” And “We liked the issues that were brought up. It brought an emotional connection and got us thinking about the work that happens in a factory.”

And on behalf of the judges, I can say this year’s winners possess those qualities and more.

Sincerely,

Rich Shivener
Assistant Director, First-Year Programs
Coordinator, Book Connection
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Adams</td>
<td>Slavery Is Manufactured</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Barnett</td>
<td>Cambodia Diary</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela Grover</td>
<td>Made In</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haley Lucas</td>
<td>On a Budget: Chapter 23 adaptation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maddie Hearn</td>
<td>Touron Goes Glocal: Chapter 30 adaptation</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanda Harris</td>
<td>What is in Your Closet?</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Kindle</td>
<td>An All American Chinese Walmart: Chapter 24</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Labor Day: Chapter 12 adaptation</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katarina Morris</td>
<td>A Few Things I Strung Together</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Rachford</td>
<td>Made in Cambodia</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyle Rahschulte</td>
<td>Letter to Me</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lindsey Smith</td>
<td>A Day in the Life of a Factory Worker</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yislain Villalona</td>
<td>Fantasy Kingdom</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carissa Walton</td>
<td>Letter to Me</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKenna Webster</td>
<td>Letter to Me</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean Wortman</td>
<td>Year Zero: Chapter 13 adaptation</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauren Whatley</td>
<td>Shoes</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WRITING/VISUAL ART CONTEST WINNERS

VISUAL ART

1ST PLACE, EARLY DEADLINE: Dean Wortman
“Year Zero: Chapter 13” adaptation.

1ST PLACE: Angela Grover
“Made in …”

2ND PLACE, EARLY DEADLINE: Maddie Hearn
“Touron Goes Glocal: Chapter 30” adaptation

2ND PLACE: Jessica Barnett
“Cambodia Diary”

3RD PLACE, EARLY DEADLINE: Haley Lucas
“On a Budget: Chapter 23” adaptation

3RD PLACE: Yislain Villalona
“Fantasy Kingdom”

HONORABLE MENTION: Elizabeth Rachford
“Made in Cambodia”

PERSONAL/CREATIVE WRITING

1ST PLACE, EARLY DEADLINE: McKenna Webster
“Letter to Me”

1ST PLACE: Katarina Morris
“A Few Things I Strung Together”

2ND PLACE, EARLY DEADLINE: Kyle Rahschulte
“Letter to Me”

2ND PLACE: Lauren Whatley
“Shoes”

3RD PLACE, EARLY DEADLINE: Carissa Walton
“Letter to Me”

3RD PLACE: Shanda Harris
“What is in Your Closet?”

HONORABLE MENTION: Lindsey Smith
“A Day in the Life of a Factory Worker”
A fever breaks out—
Faster! Faster!
In the inferno, they work away,
Working for spinning demons,
Puppets on a string.
Faster! Faster!
The demand is high,
Finances are low,
They work too slow,
For an unnamed,
Manufactured
Image.

Children are dying—
Faster! Faster!
They work until the break of day,
For the vanity of others,
Who want their money.
Faster! Faster!
Waiting for their demise,
The children are sick.
No money, none—
Their mothers are
Faceless toilers
In heat.

What is your concept
Of “beautiful?”
To watch the world burn and children
die,
All for a minimum wage?
What if looks do kill?

Not you, but them—
The people of imperfection,
Those who slave
For your perfection.
You’re beautiful,
They’re not.

You cannot see them,
Not now—never!
They can only imagine your image,
When they see you on display,
Your essence in clothes.
Possibly, no,
They will never see
Who they’ve created,
Over borders
Keeping them out
Of your worldly
Country.

You cannot save them,
Not now—never,
Will you free them from their lament.
They are the pawns of businessmen
And propaganda.
They will never
Be free from this plague
Or feed their children.
We must help them
And we must lend them
Support.
Honestly, how I created this piece is not a very magical and inspiring story. It was really just an in-class project of what my professor liked to call, “forced creativity.” It took me a while to get started on this, because my poems are always fueled by emotions towards what I’m writing/metaphorically writing about. I looked around at my peers and remembered a situation where I didn’t fit in, a time when I wasn’t “beautiful” or “ideal” because I wasn’t wearing the same clothes as everyone else or had as good of a phone as they did (jail-broken used AT&T iPhone 3G that was hacked to work with T-Mobile, compared to most of everyone’s new 4S or 5).

I thought of Where Am I Wearing afterwards and thought of the people behind these fashions and trendy objects, the ones who make them in the factories, not the inventors. Obviously, my rage coming from this vain series of trends influenced this poem. It’s a shame, once you think about it, that the objects of our vanity are made by underpaid people of third-world countries who are trying to keep their families alive, yet are only our slaves who create the objects of our vapid first-world desires. I wish there could be a more humane way of giving them money that wouldn’t be the icons of degrading companies like Abercrombie & Fitch, who not only have the people in factories make their clothes, but also state that you are not “cool” or “beautiful” if you can’t fit in their clothes. These people are the slaves of this manufactured image, not as the consumer, but as the worker.
Cambodia Diary

June 3rd, 2013

...continued from last week. On the way to the market, I saw a man walking his bicycle with a large bag on the back. I was impressed by his ability to balance the heavy load.

June 11, 2013

I’m getting closer to the end of my trip, but life keeps moving forward. Today, I spent the morning exploring the city. I met up with a local guide who showed me around the main attractions.

June 15, 2013

She was quiet all week until today. We had a discussion about the different cultures and how they interact with each other. It was an eye-opening experience.
Artist’s Statement

The idea for this diary came from my own love of journaling, and wanting to see inside the daily lives of the girls in the *Where Am I Wearing* book by author Kelsey Timmerman. In it, he describes some of the sweatshop workers in Cambodia that he met. He spent time with a group of girls who all lived in a one room home, with the barest of comforts: one bed for eight girls, no privacy, and cramped conditions. They worked hard every day under the poorest of conditions for the slimmest pay and some of them had dreams they wanted to fulfill. The girl I am speaking for in the diary is named Nari and she dreams of being a hairdresser someday. I love that despite the life this girl has had of living in poverty and being away from her family. She dreams of doing something so many girls around the world in every lifestyle dream of. When I wrote the few journal entries, I wanted to show her as a regular girl with regular dreams like all of us. It is easy to look at them and think of them only as victims of a cruel, harsh world. I had not thought of what they saw themselves as. I wanted Nari to be a regular girl living in a very difficult world, but still having the thoughts and feelings we all have. I don’t know if every girl there is like this, but in the book I felt like Nari had strength about her, and dreams that I found to be very powerful that spoke to the resilience of humans in many situations.

Judges’ comments:

“We liked that you could pick up the journal and look through it. It was a good piece to read; there was a lot of emotional within.”
Made In...
While reading *Where Am I Wearing?* the thought kept coming to me as to how dependent America is on outsourcing and foreign countries and how without them a lot of the products we take for granted would not be accessible to us. That is where I drew my inspiration from; I used the four foreign countries mentioned in the book in my picture. In the center I drew America using watercolors to give it a red, white, and blue-like coloring. Holding on to various regions of America are four arms, each one representing one of the four countries: Cambodia, Honduras, China, and Bangladesh. Written on each arm is “Made In...” and the country’s name. The words are outlined in red to symbolize the blood and hard work that is put into making our everyday items. The book states that these factories are not necessarily sweat shops; there are fire exits clearly marked, fans, and a moderate temperature within the factories themselves. The only thing that could be compared, really, is the fact that these workers are getting paid severely low wages. Through this kind of work and exploitation of workers in other countries, our country is held up. That is what I hope comes through in my picture.

**Judges’ comments:**

“What we got from the image was all of these places tugging at our country. It makes you feel when you look at it. She put a lot of thought into it, especially when you know it’s in connection with the book.”
On a Budget: Chapter 23
adaptation

My artwork was inspired by the On a Budget chapter. Timmerman is trying to figure out what his purpose is and concludes that, “… maybe my sole function in our global society is to consume.” While on the Guangzhou Shamian Island he tries to live on a workers budget, which was $3 for food and most of the nice food cost $10. Some prominent images from the chapter that also encouraged my artwork were the Jim Keady Case, Nike, and the world’s purpose as a whole.

Artist’s Statement

Haley Lucas
Instructor: Peg Adams, UNV 101, and Sara Elizabeth Moore, ENG 101
Maddie Hearn
Instructor: Peg Adams, UNV 101, and Sara Elizabeth Moore, ENG 101

Touron Goes Glocal: Chapter 30
adaptation

Artist’s Statement

The quote from chapter 30 (Touron Goes Glocal) that stood out to me and inspired by artwork was “Do you care?” Some prominent images that also inspired my art from were; poverty vs. living wage, money, the global economy, and iPhone girl. Timmerman begins to tie loose ends together through being an engaged consumer and thinking about his tags more than ever through the “iPhone girl” who bridged the gap between consumer and manufacturer. He reflects on how the company “Sole Rebels” makes recycled shoes, providing the people in Ethiopia job opportunities yet, the abundance of untapped markets for goods made in livable work conditions still concerns him.
What is in Your Closet?

What is in your closet?
Are your clothes made of the finest threads, materials, or colors
Or, are they of the hands that cut, sewed, and stitched for hours
What route did they take to get to the store that sold them
You bought from the rack, just because you had to own it

What is in your closet?
Living in a world where everything is riches and gold
In a world where most stories go untold
Secrets lie in the hands of children
Just so a corporation could make a million or billion

What is in your closet?
I work my fingers to the bone
To provide a meal, a house, or a place I call home
I eat food of the cheapest taste
While you eat expensive food, that you sometimes waste

What is in your closet?
I have the will and drive to succeed
Although I may not have the best educational degree
My work conditions may not be the best
But that does not give you the right to protest

What is in your closet?
My world is third as you perceive it
Your world is greed and I think it fits
Eat, sleep, and play in the land of the USA
While I work, slave, and pray, twenty-four hours a day

What is in your closet?
You may not judge me or my company
Until you have worked next to me in this factory
Now I ask not what is in your wallet
But to take a look at what is in your closet
Writer’s Statement

I wanted to step outside of my comfort zone of writing papers, so I took on the challenge of writing my first poem. I tried to write it from the standpoint of a worker. Although I have never been in this situation, I used the situations from the book to convey a message. I wanted to talk about their living and working conditions and how corporations benefit from this business. We in the United States may fight for better working conditions for them, but we have never walked a day in their shoes. So who are we to fight for better, when we haven’t even stitched a shirt, a coat, or even a sweater?

Judges’ comments:

“The rhyme works well, and it’s well written for her first poem. The last two lines were powerful.”
In chapter 12, *Labor Day*, a Cambodian man is seen selling birds to pray on, and retrieving the birds once they are released so that he can re-sell them. Timmerman notes that Americans pushed work to Cambodia by making high wages and labor laws, but to us jeans will always be *American*. A quote that inspired my artwork was “These were events that, extrapolated over time, priced American laborers out of work and led their jobs being relocated to a place like Cambodia, where workers’ rights and pay were less, where the sorrows are released and recycled, but never forgotten.”

In Chapter 24 Timmerman visits a Chinese Walmart and notices how it is very different. It is then that he gets homesick and states “I don’t miss the things, but I miss the lifestyle and the relationships that I’ve built around them.” The things Timmerman saw in the Chinese Walmart and the sight of an Americanizing country really hit home to him and that is what inspired my artwork.
A Few Things I Strung Together

I would like to begin by stating that every human is equal, no matter their wage, job, ethnicity, or origin; everyone should be treated according to that statement. But, unfortunately, like many black and white statements, gray area has been fabricated. I have always been concerned about pain occurring in the world and the inner workings of other countries. Kelsey Timmerman’s autobiographical novella opened my eyes to the truths lurking across the oceans. I would like to start with a comparison – keep in mind, I am not mocking Timmerman; I am making an objective observation. He said he traveled with his brother and a biologist to go crocodile hunting; upon arrival, they had not slept in approximately eighteen hours, trudged through thigh-deep water, and encountered a venomous snake. This would be problematic if indigenous tribes didn’t live there every day of their life.

In Bangladesh, thousands of workers cram into a factory where the foundations are cracked and the I-beams sway. In the late 2000s, a factory collapsed, and 1,129 workers were killed, including men, women, and children. A young girl survived the catastrophe by living off cookies and pockets of water for eighteen days. That is a true example of suffering and peril. Ironically, Timmerman’s brother was studying for his PhD—a luxury that only a rare few are accustomed to in Bangladesh or China. I understand that Timmerman wasn’t trying to exploit the hardships of people in other countries, but my heart cannot help but hemorrhage at the thought of living only to work. It isn’t our job as “the most powerful country in the world” to make sure everyone is treated humanely, but it is a big concern, most especially when purchasing products from those countries.

Teva Sandals, the brand that Timmerman wore in his book, are sold for roughly $70 a pair. I have a question to which I know the answer — what percentage of those profits truly filters back to the production line? We all know that the majority of corporate CEOs and presidents are paid upwards of six figures. The most interesting part of the whole process is that if citizens in Bangladesh didn’t manufacture the product, those CEOS would be out of a job. The Bangladeshis are innocently responsible for the epidemic of American excess. The problem begins and ends with the United States of America. There is no middleman, no intermediate, and no excuse. The United States is responsible for indulging in excess: overpaying and, therefore, sponsoring the world’s perpetuation of poverty. As a role model for other countries, we inspire them to do the same. Unfortunately, I am not innocent; I have participated as well. But awareness needs to be raised so individuals can act meaningfully and cohesively.
Timmerman’s book may be the start of something big.

Timmerman’s story of Amilcar struck me as riveting, not because it was a dream come true, but because it sparked a fire in my mind: people dream of being American. As a country we are called “the world’s superpower,” but our inner turmoil is just as grandiose as anyone else’s. Amilcar began his career making shoes and literally risked his life to come to the United States to start anew as a shoe salesman, his dream job. This past summer I also was a shoe saleswoman, and although I did consider myself lucky to have a job, I didn’t consider it an occupation to pursue for years to come. People in third-world countries have it exponentially worse than anyone in the United States.

Timmerman also recounts his conversation with Solo, who spoke of watching the donkeys he fed before himself and of referring to his boss as “master” — a colloquialism that should have perished centuries ago. Solo also told Timmerman his “masters” did unspeakable things to him, much worse than beatings or lashings. He received a death threat for speaking about leaving the country.

Being a U.S. citizen is simple, but being a global citizen is complex, with less access to education. Being a global citizen doesn’t mean accepting globalization as it comes; it means being thoughtful when purchasing, traveling, and taking action. Remember that we are all Earth’s inhabitants, all human beings by the same process of birth. Although Timmerman only shared five stories with his readers from a handful of factories in a few countries — imagine all the stories that were left untold.

Currently only 3% of the clothing that American citizens wear is produced in the United States; I may not be an economist, but I am positive that our unemployment rate is still far from gleaming. What about manufacturing more clothes in the United States? There is definitely space. It doesn’t take extreme talent or even a college degree to stone-grind jeans or sew shoes together. Passing those jobs off to machines is ridiculous when right across the sea there are 700 people rubbing elbows in a 1,000 sq. ft. factory doing it all by hand. Should the United States of America be different? We are all equal, remember?

Timmerman referenced a quote by Martin Luther King, Jr., “Before you have finished breakfast this morning, you’ll have relied on half the world.” Timmerman’s newly released book Where Am I Eating: An Adventure Through the Global Food Economy (2013) delves into the food aspect of King’s statement, but what I want to focus on is America’s power complex concerning imports. The United States of America imports food, clothing, oil, textiles, among other things, and is roughly 20% self-sufficient. Would we survive if the world stopped operating its ports? I understand that there is a high level of mutual benefit and reliance from other countries, but honestly, America would quickly implode.

An interesting note that I would like to add is the vanity with which we all occupy ourselves, not excluding myself. I put together items for an outfit that I might wear on a typical day and added the costs of all the components:

- Sweater.......................... 20
- Jeans............................. 35
- Shoes.............................. 40
- Undergarments............. 60

Currently only 3% of the clothing that American citizens wear is produced in the United States; I may not be an economist, but I am positive that our unemployment rate is still far from gleaming. What about manufacturing more clothes in the United States? There is definitely space. It doesn’t take extreme talent or even a college degree to stone-grind jeans or sew shoes together. Passing those jobs off to machines is ridiculous when right across the sea there are 700 people rubbing elbows in a 1,000 sq. ft. factory doing it all by hand. Should the United States of America be different? We are all equal, remember?

Timmerman referenced a quote by Martin Luther King, Jr., “Before you have finished breakfast this morning, you’ll have relied on half the world.” Timmerman’s newly released book Where Am I Eating: An Adventure Through the Global Food Economy (2013) delves into the food aspect of King’s statement, but what I want to focus on is America’s power complex concerning imports. The United States of America imports food, clothing, oil, textiles, among other things, and is roughly 20% self-sufficient. Would we survive if the world stopped operating its ports? I understand that there is a high level of mutual benefit and reliance from other countries, but honestly, America would quickly implode.

An interesting note that I would like to add is the vanity with which we all occupy ourselves, not excluding myself. I put together items for an outfit that I might wear on a typical day and added the costs of all the components:

- Sweater.......................... 20
- Jeans............................. 35
- Shoes.............................. 40
- Undergarments............. 60

Currently only 3% of the clothing that American citizens wear is produced in the United States; I may not be an economist, but I am positive that our unemployment rate is still far from gleaming. What about manufacturing more clothes in the United States? There is definitely space. It doesn’t take extreme talent or even a college degree to stone-grind jeans or sew shoes together. Passing those jobs off to machines is ridiculous when right across the sea there are 700 people rubbing elbows in a 1,000 sq. ft. factory doing it all by hand. Should the United States of America be different? We are all equal, remember?

Timmerman referenced a quote by Martin Luther King, Jr., “Before you have finished breakfast this morning, you’ll have relied on half the world.” Timmerman’s newly released book Where Am I Eating: An Adventure Through the Global Food Economy (2013) delves into the food aspect of King’s statement, but what I want to focus on is America’s power complex concerning imports. The United States of America imports food, clothing, oil, textiles, among other things, and is roughly 20% self-sufficient. Would we survive if the world stopped operating its ports? I understand that there is a high level of mutual benefit and reliance from other countries, but honestly, America would quickly implode.

An interesting note that I would like to add is the vanity with which we all occupy ourselves, not excluding myself. I put together items for an outfit that I might wear on a typical day and added the costs of all the components:

- Sweater.......................... 20
- Jeans............................. 35
- Shoes.............................. 40
- Undergarments............. 60
How much of that total is returned to the workers in Bangladesh? China? Cambodia? I don’t know and frankly don’t know if I could stand to hear the truth. It would absolutely shatter my hope for humanity.

Timmerman did an excellent job turning his curiosity into a book, but as readers and fellow humans who care, we need to start a movement to further inspire and inform others. This would give hope to the world and its factory workers. Let us begin by giving instead of taking, thinking instead of blindly saying yes. Timmerman was blunt and honest about his experiences abroad. His tone and message doesn’t change when transitioning from written to spoken form. He doesn’t throw his global education at you, instead he incorporates it into stories and conversation as a true writer should—as a real game changer does.

I hope this book inspires a change in the world. It would be liberating to know that the other 7 billion people on Earth are happier now than when they began. A small change is a necessity, but a big change would be a blessing.

Writer’s Statement

This paper is the product of my blunt opinions and experiences from reading Where Am I Wearing?: A Global Tour to the Countries, Factories, and People That Make Our Clothes by Kelsey Timmerman and attending his talk. It is my being open, honest, and nothing but myself. This is not a book review, but a summation of thoughts and feelings that I kept track of during the period in which I read the book.

Judges’ comments:

“It compelled the reader to take a stand on the issue. It was very powerful, with a lot of information and opinion.”
Elizabeth Rachford
Instructor: Debra Allan

Made in Cambodia
Artist’s Statement

The main theme of my art piece is “MADE IN CAMBODIA.” The illustration represents three different elements from Kelsey Timmerman’s journey through Cambodia to discover where and how his blue jeans were made. I used brilliantly colored feathers, the temple of Phnom Penh, and three flowers made from plastic bags to represent different scenes that he witnessed in Cambodia.

When Kelsey first arrives, he speaks about how the Cambodians pay for birds to hold while they pray; then they release the birds when they have finished praying in the hopes that their sorrows and pains will be released as well. Kelsey witnesses one bird fly to freedom. Then, all too soon, it falls into water. The Cambodian flag features the temple of Phnom Penh, which was also another very brief stop along the way in Kelsey’s journey and would help portray the theme of “MADE IN CAMBODIA.” One of the last places he visits in Cambodia is a dump where dozens of people wait for trucks to bring in new loads of trash, so they can rifle through it in hopes of finding something of value. One very strong point in this chapter is, “There is beauty in poverty,” and that is exactly what the flowers signify. Made from plastic garbage bags, these flowers embody the ideal that there is beauty in poverty.

Judges’ comments:

“There were a lot of interesting elements. Each piece stood for something, and we liked the idea that beauty can be found in poverty.”
Letter to Me

Summer 2009

Hey Kyle,

Aren’t you happy you’re out of middle school? You will finally know what it feels like to be a “big kid.” But with entering high school comes much more responsibility.

This is you from the future as a current freshman enrolled in college at Northern Kentucky University. You’re currently undecided as a major. I have some important things to tell you that will help you through high school.

One thing to start with is don’t procrastinate. Do your assignments as soon as you receive them. Procrastinating will only cause you a lot of unneeded stress and will only frustrate you. Also, stay awake in your chemistry class. I know it is a very uninteresting class for you, but you need to pay attention and give it your best. The higher your grades, the more it will help you out with your KEES money toward college. We all know that the price of books and tuition for college is a tremendous amount and the more help the better.

Also, study for your tests. I know you just want to get by, but study and exceed, don’t just be average or less. Give each test, homework assignment, and quiz the best effort you can possibly give it.

Play baseball your freshman year of high school instead of being too worried about not being good enough and waiting until your sophomore year. You are most definitely good enough. It is something you have done your entire life for Pete’s sake!

Get to know more people and become friends with them. It isn’t a bad thing to have many friends, and you will start to realize who some of your real friends are and who your fake friends end up being.

Be nicer to your parents. I know sometimes they may get annoying to you and seem like they’re constantly on you about something, but they only do it because they care and they want the best for you. They are extremely great parents, so be grateful.

Also, visit your grandparents as much as you possibly can. Yes they do live in Louisville. But that is no excuse. Your grandparents are great people and want nothing more than to see you a lot. Your grandpa will be pronounced with cancer and he will fight through it. He will be told he has cancer again less than two years later. Being as strong willed and lucky as your grandpa is, he will prevail and continue to live his life.

In your junior year of high school you will meet an amazing girl named Ali, and eventually you will fall in love with each other. You will have many rough patches throughout your relationship, but it will be worth it. She is a great girl, so treat
her as well as you know she should be treated.

There will be many times where you wish high school was over and you try and wish it away. High school will be over much quicker than you believe, and all of the people you attend school with will eventually depart and go their separate ways. Enjoy the time at your school with them because whether you think so or not, you will miss it.

Best of luck to you in high school,

Kyle

---

**Writer’s Statement**

In my University 101 class we are reading the book titled *Where Am I Wearing?* In my class we were asked to write a letter to ourselves much like Kelsey Timmerman does in the book. In my letter I told myself some of the things that would occur throughout my high school career. I mention some of the good times that would occur and some of the worse times that would occur. I also give myself advice on certain ideas so I didn’t regret them throughout my life.
A Day in the Life of a Factory Worker

I work 7 days a week. More hours than I care to count. I don’t get paid to work overtime, but I do it in fear of losing my job. I work difficult jobs, but it is all to help out my family. While making your clothes, I think about my daughter; I left her at home with my parents. I haven’t seen her in 2 years since I started this job. I send most of the money back to my parents to help them out. They take care of my daughter; it is the least I can do. I wish I could see her. I don’t hang pictures of her up in my apartment because I miss her so much.

The jobs I work are tough. More than 12 hours a day I spend in the factory, standing on my feet all day long. I work in a jeans factory. Every day, I wash jeans to make them look “worn.” That’s how Americans want them. I create the holes and dye them to unreasonable colors. When they need help somewhere else in the factory, I volunteer just to learn a new skill. I have also worked in a t-shirt factory. Cutting, sewing, and translating the image on to the newly sewn shirt. The job isn’t fun; it is long, and difficult. The only break I get is a half an hour for lunch and dinner. This is the only way I can support my family and myself.

I don’t know you and you don’t know me, so please buy the items I make. If you don’t buy them, then I don’t get paid, and I will lose my job. So don’t worry about my working conditions. These hours I work help you and me. You get the clothes you wear, and I get food in my belly. If you boycott the articles I make, I’m out of a job and living on nothing again. It’s a hard life, but I wouldn’t have it any other way.

I live in an apartment that you would probably call a box. It is a roof over my head, a shelter from the elements. The city is not where I would prefer to be living, but it is where I need to be at this time. In a few years, I will have more money saved up and will be able to move back home, but, until then, I work. My family means everything to me, and I will do anything to help them live the best life that they can. I want my daughter to have a better life than I’ve had, so I will work until I get her through school.

You and I are very similar; we both work jobs we are not happy with to support our families. The only difference is I don’t complain. I make due with what I have and take every opportunity I am given. We really aren’t that different, you see.
Writer’s Statement

I decided to write this story about the life of a worker because we don’t realize how bad some people have it. It compares the way their life is and how they see us and how we see them. Both sides need something from each other to help survive. This relates to Where Am I Wearing? because a lot of the things I write about come from things that the author talks about in the book about the workers’ living conditions they explained to him. I would like to show people that we could have it a lot worse than we actually do. We could all be living the way these clothing workers do, and we could try to do something about their working conditions, but it would just make things worse for them.
Yislain Villalona
Instructor: Debra Allan

Fantasy Kingdom
Artist’s Statement

I decided to draw a piece about the chapter where Kelsey escorted some children to Fantasy Kingdom Amusement Park in Bangladesh; however, my main focus is not the children but the old farmer, Mr. Azhar. I chose him as my main focus because I personally think that he was most affected by the trip to Fantasy Kingdom. Since he was the oldest, he had gone the longest without any kind of excitement in his life because he worked so much for his family. I believe the farmer was the main character of this chapter, and I wanted to portray his trip to Fantasy Kingdom as the rejuvenation of his innocence.

Judges’ comments:

“The drawing has lots of detail. It was one of those pieces that capture your attention with the color. The bottom of the drawing is really well done.”
Hey Carissa,

This is you, four years later after your freshman year of high school. First off, congratulations you made it through high school in the first place. Second, you’re now a college freshman. 

You’re freshman year of high school was a tough year, not only for you, but your family too. You start hanging with the wrong crowd, getting caught up in the wrong things. Don’t worry - you get through it. Don’t freak out when you and your mom constantly disagree on everything, where you end up admitting yourself in the hospital, and moving in with your dad. Don’t regret that, or let it be a burden. It actually has an advantage of you and mom’s relationship becoming something unbelievably amazing. She’ll become your best friend. Seriously. (Plus, mom is always right. Doesn’t matter if she really is wrong or not.)

Volleyball is still really important to you, just like middle school. Take a better advantage of being a good player. It could come in handy with scholarships for colleges not so close to home. Volleyball actually helped you with your grades. You’ll still be a good student and care a lot about them.

High school will teach you a lot. Not just educational wise, but relationships, friendships, etc. You and Nathan’s relationship will continue to be a rocky one and will last through your senior year. He never really goes away. Take that as a learning lesson. Having your heart broken sucks, but it teaches you to be stronger and more independent. You’ll learn you’ll constantly have your guard up with people. Keep it that way, you won’t get hurt as often. You’ll find out maybe you and Nathan weren’t meant for each other. And he will have a baby on the way right before you guys graduate high school. Move on! You don’t need the extra baggage on you. And you’ll be a lot happier if you do so.

You’ll have many friends that really aren’t “friends”. They’ll show you the real side of you, and at the end of your high school career you’ll become closer with people you never thought you would. This is amazing, because even during your first year of college, they’re still there. People never really notice the good things you do, only the mistakes you make. You eventually adapt to not caring what they think or say. They all go away eventually.

You and your dad’s relationship will hit a couple rocky roads. You won’t seem very connected or close with him anymore, especially since he got remarried. It’s ok. That relationship will start changing once you get older and more responsible. Trust me.

Lastly, your senior year will be the BEST year of high school yet. You become closer with your senior class as a whole, and there’s way less drama.
than your other years of high school. You’ll make the best memories ever and become so much closer with people. Your senior night for volleyball you’ll cry like a little baby. You play Walton-Verona but end up losing by 3 points the final game. One of the home games you’ll never forget. You’ll end up winning most school spirit, because of the time you put into t-shirts and events for the senior class. Also, you’ll end up winning prom queen, and mom and dad will be ecstatic. It’s one of the best memories of senior year.

Just know, everything you go through no matter good or bad, you’ll get through it. You grow up a lot through high school and find out what really matters. You’ll love the person you become, and how much closer you are with your parents. Now, make it through college. You may be stressed your first semester, but you get through it.

-Carissa (Riss)

Writer’s Statement

In my University 101 class we wrote a letter just like Kelsey Timmerman did at the end of his book. We had to write a letter to our freshman self in high school, from our freshman self in college. In my letter, I wrote to myself about the major events that happened to me and their impact on my life. Each major event in my letter helped me develop who I am as a person now.
Dear 14 year old self,

Let me first start off by saying that I’m writing this letter to you as a college freshman hoping to offer some insight to you as you begin our high school journey. I’ve already been through what you are going to go through, so don’t shrug my advice off like I know we tend to do.

All those movies put the idea in your head that high school is going to be the greatest years of your life, but fortunately that isn’t the case. High school is an emotional roller coaster filled with exciting highs and terrible lows with awkward and embarrassing pauses in-between. Life would be sad if high school was the peak. Basically what I’m trying to say is enjoy high school, but don’t worry when it doesn’t live up to your high expectations. You will learn that things rarely do.

I feel the need to address your current wardrobe situation. At this time I know black and skulls and anything you can find at Hot Topic is predominantly what makes up the closet, but feel free to embrace other style aspects. Color is definitely NOT a bad thing. Our emo phase doesn’t last too long, but if I can influence the change sooner, that would be a blessing.

To quote Taylor Swift (I know right now you are thinking gag me, but soon you will learn to love her and her music will really resonate with you) “In your life you’ll do greater things than dating the boy on the football team”. You don’t understand this yet but you will shortly. September of your freshman year this new guy (over 6 foot tall with muscles to die for) will get on the bus, and even at 6:30 in the morning, when all you want to do is sleep, he will get your attention and he will hold it all throughout high school and to be honest he still has my attention now. You will fall in love with his deep blue eyes, his smile, his personality, his secrets he trusts you with and everything else about him. He will become your best friend. He will also break your heart… again and again, but loving him is worth it. It sounds crazy and cliché but just you wait. With all that being said, Tyler brings us both wonderful and terrible memories, but don’t get too focused on everything with him that you block your friends out. They will have your back when you are laughing, fuming, crying, and everything else in between.

Do not be afraid to stand up for yourself. There will be several instances where the only way to make things better is to do so. Yes it can be scary, but it is totally worth it. Mean people will be mean until you show them that you aren’t going to take their crap.

Most importantly you will learn who your true friends are and honestly you will be surprised, but treat those true friends right. Don’t get mad over
stupid stuff and don’t take stuff out on them when it isn’t their fault. They are the ones that will have to listen to your moody rampages and your crying fits, so make sure never to forget to show them some love.

Love always,
Your 18 year old self
PS. Do NOT get your industrial pierced. It looks cute but it is a terrible decision that doesn’t end well for us!

Writer’s Statement

In my University 101 class we wrote a letter just like Kelsey Timmerman did at the end of his book. We had to write a letter to our freshman self in high school, from our freshman self in college. In my letter, I wrote to myself about the major events that happened to me and their impact on my life. Each major event in my letter helped me develop who I am as a person now.
My sketch was inspired from the chapter “Year Zero”. Timmerman was researching blue jeans in Cambodia, and he makes it obvious that the country still is and always will be a base minefield and warzone. Some prominent images from this chapter were horrible violence and civil unrest. A quote that really stood out to me was from a worker that Timmerman met who said, “I was herding cows in the woods when I heard some voices… I went to look and saw my family shot just like this… I was eight.”
Shoes

I’m stretched and pulled
I’m worn thin
I’m molded into something
I wasn’t in the beginning
I’m made into the perfect shape and
Then I’m shipped off to all the states
I’m given to a little boy as a holiday gift
He wears me until I’m falling apart and ripping at the seams
“You’re my favorite!” he tells me
I love you more than all the rest
Then he got a new pair and no longer was I the best
“Too small!” he said and then threw me out
Now I am just a piece of trash
I am put out on the curb
Then taken to the dump
But then someone else comes and picks me up
They drop me into a large bin
That’s cold and dark inside
Just when I thought it was over
Just when it looked like the end
I’m taken to a place that’s all too familiar, the place where I began
They break me down and tear me apart
Then I start over again
I’m stretched and pulled
I’m worn thin
I’m molded into something I was before
I’m made into the perfect shape
Once again I’m shipped off to all the states
For someone else to love me
Writer’s Statement

For the contest, I decided to create a poem. It is called “Shoes”, and it’s about the journey of a pair of shoes that were made in a factory. I wanted to do something a little different, so I did that by personifying a pair of shoes. What we mostly look at in Where Am I Wearing? Are the people in the factories and what their lives are like, but what we don’t really look at is the product. I want the audience to see things from a different angle and look at things from a new perspective.

Judges’ comments:

“From the shoes’ perspective, it was unique, and it was mentally appealing.”
Coming to the 2014-2015 school year ...

"These are great stories about people who might be your neighbours, and Bayoumi delivers them with urgency, compassion, wryness and hints of poetry." — Salon.com

كيف تشعر و HOW DOES IT
ليك إحساس لديك FEEL TO BE
أنا مشكلة؟ A PROBLEM?
Being Young and Arab in America
Moustafa Bayoumi

Learn more at bookconnection.nku.edu.