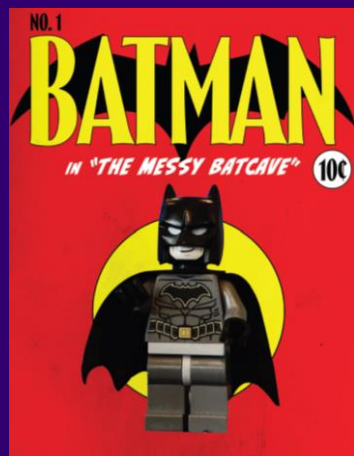


2024 Trash Art Contest

LITERATURE SUBMISSIONS



The Messy Batcave
by Greg Olson

The Trash Bag Abyss

Grasped gingerly between my tiny child-sized fingers,
My soft every-pains-top something
Slightly smooth
Flat
But with a sticky tackiness,
A brilliant orange liquid inside

Our top up to the top of my lips
And the taste is empty
Reflecting my pearly mouth

New empty in my hand,
This thing is useless
I squish it tight
As I haphazardly moved in the park
Reluctant the solitary squirrel,
The steps and pops,
All for better nutrition
A mangled version of an eloquent curved self

With my little eye,
I spy
Souring black and metallic,
The nearest trash bin

I divide on over
But beware and beware my how
Staring at the three different holes in front of me

Why are there three?
Unsure of the difference
I slung my shoulders, lit up on my tights,
And top the better one out of the hole

Over and over again these three holes confound me

The Trash Bag Abyss
by Abby Kerbyson

Bottom Feeders

One incredible thing about oceans
Are the incredible breaths that reside
In the waters so deep
Even light cannot seep
Through the chasm of the unyielding tide

All the sea spiders, lobsters, and eels
Be as consumed to stars in the binary
Won't accept but enough
To deal with the cold
Making ocean life gritty and grimy

When our daily detritus is dumped
Where the sharks and the pelican swim,
Do they gather an immense
With the squid and sea bass
To applaud our most wasteful of whims?

Do the plastic empty wrappers on plastic
Washed down with chemical waste?
Do they sip "my" guava
What a treat" as they roach
On the park as intentionally negligence?

Do they build little coves from bottles and cans
Lashed together with scarfed fishing line?
Do they keep warm with fries
Sparked from old rubber tires
Demanded in quarters, oil, and grease?

The answer, we know, is a full-bellied "No"
Our garbage is not right or welcome
As it piles up thick
And these mistakes get sick
Their abundance abounds much more seldom

It's so easy to not think about them,
Our fishy friends so far away
But neighbors are neighbors
So let's do them a favor
And keep our bad habits at bay

Bottom Feeders
by Jim Ballew

Litter Bug
By K. C. Smith

The day I told my daughter a tale of a bug that consumes the trash people leave behind,
was the day I realized I may have been raising my son wrong. I reassured her that his biology
wrapper on the ground while making my office no longer. The beautiful LW' landscape descended
with a pink and white Drem-Drem wrapper. This wasn't shown in the company handbook.

"Oh! That's good! Then we don't have to pick it up!" He said with glee

I quickly followed with, "Though the name he eats the large he gets. He will eventually run
into a Godzilla bug that will consume the math and all that remains!" She stopped down to pick up
her biology wrapper and placed it in her toy jacket pocket.

You could imagine the look in her eyes when she realized this creature. If not, picture her
receiving the right before as a ray attached along the side of the bathtub as she stared in a pot
of bubbles and bushes. The air carries leave the power he held in that moment. Had he wanted to,
he could have ruled the world. Though I came to her rescue before he reached his great abilities.

I think about the reason that changed my son. The very rules we set with tales of the
horror men and those creatures.

"Have you ever told anyone before midnight because you will get sick." "Shmoo would say!
Regardless! I believe that with my son's presence.

"Have you ever been in a room of yours and he will bring you a large bag of food? I love
and he would have been, much more useful than the plastic toy toys that probably sit on the
bottom shelf of a child's room, unattended and unloved.

"If you were right after eating you will get a cramp and down." I leave I wouldn't really
down because I am a fabulous musician and never needed the oxygen.

Litter Bug
by K. C. Smith

<p>My name is Benny the Banana I was born in the tropics. Not the Sahara And shipped to QFC. Where a lovely student brought me. Lovers ate me for lunch. I filled him a basket. And then he threw me in a garbage can. Dinner! Through a plastic bag I screamed "What! You must not know who I am!" He rolled the bin to the street. And on Tuesday (this isn't new). They threw me on a train to Oregon. Oregon? Oregon! Now I'm in a dump. Squashed into a lump. Stuck between bricks and Styrofoam. A long, long way from home.</p>	<p>My name is Benny the Banana I was born in the tropics. Not the Sahara And shipped to QFC. Where a lovely student brought me. Dad ate me for breakfast. I made her happy to eat. And then she threw me in the compost. Treat me! I smiled the most! Her roommate (dinner like a fish) took me outside to a dark, black box. Worms cleaned up my part. And pooped me out (I swear- for real). Now I'm rich, sweet black dirt I know it's hot- hot- hot to burn. Tomorrow a hole will spring out of me. And I'll continue my life with glee. I'll look up at the sky, And now you know why.</p>
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Benny the Banana
by Benji Blatt

NO. 1

BATMAN

IN "THE MESSY BATCAVE"

10¢





The Trash Bag Abyss

Grasped gingerly between my tiny child-sized fingers,
My soft sweaty palm cups something

Subtly smooth

Hard

But with a murky translucency,
A brilliant orange liquid inside

One tip up to the top of my lips
And the bottle is empty
Refreshing my parched mouth

Now empty in my hand,
This thing is useless
I squish it tight
As I lollygag around in the park
Relishing the rubbery squeal,
The snaps and pops,
As the bottle conforms.

A mangled version of its eloquent curved self

With my little eye,
I spy,
Something black and metallic.

The nearest trash bins

I dawdle on over
But hesitate and furrow my brow
Staring at the three different holes in front of me

Why are there three?

Unsure of the difference
I shrug my shoulders, lift up on my tiptoes,
And bop the bottle into one of the holes

Over and over again these three holes confront me

Quizzically, I start to consider
The items in my hand
That I let fall
Into the trash bag abyss

Why do we throw these things away?
Where do they go?

Over and over and over
Plastic bottles, containers, baggies, and food wrap
Tossed by me, by my friends, by my parents
Into the trash bag abyss

I learn in elementary school
The lifecycle of a plastic bottle
Extracted out of the ground as oil or petroleum
Refined into little plastic pellets
Malleable material for hungry companies
Who pump out plastic products

Then it comes into my hands
Only to leave my hands

Fallen into the trash bag abyss

Transported to a secluded place where it will sit
And sit

And sit

Slowly breaking down,
To a microscopic level
But never disappearing.

If plastic is placed in the recycling bin
My teacher tells me
It can be reused

Once again a curvy bottle with sweet liquid inside

I decide firmly
I don't want to contribute
To the accumulating mountains of trash
That are growing,
Piling with every added bottle

Next time I go to the trash bins to throw something away
I'll choose the second hole

Bottom Feeders

One incredible thing about oceans
Are the incredible beasts that reside
In the waters so deep
Even light cannot seep
Through the churn of the unyielding tide

All the sea spiders, lobsters, and eels
So accustomed to days in the briny
Won't adapt fast enough
To deal with the stuff
Making ocean life gritty and grimy

When our daily detritus is dumped
Where the sharks and the jellyfish swim,
Do they gather en masse
With the squid and sea bass
To applaud our most wasteful of whims?

Do the crabs enjoy snacking on plastic
Washed down with chemical waste?
Do they say "oh my gosh!
What a treat!" as they nosh
On the junk we intentionally misplace?

Do they build little cities from bottles and cans
Lashed together with snarled fishing line?
Do they keep warm with fires
Sparked from old rubber tires
Drenched in gasoline, oil, and grime?

The answer, we know, is a full-bellied "No"
Our garbage is not helpful or welcome.
As it piles up thick
And these creatures get sick
Their abundance abounds much more seldom

It's so easy to not think about them,
Our fishy friends so far away.
But neighbors are neighbors
So let's do them a favor
And keep our bad habits at bay

Litter Bug

By K. C. Smith

The day I told my daughter a tale of a tiny bug that consumes the trash people leave behind, was the day I realized I may have been turning into my mother. I witnessed her toss her lollipop wrapper on the ground while visiting my office on campus. The beautiful UW landscape decorated with a pink and white Dum-Dum wrapper. This wasn't shown in the campus brochure.

“Oh! That's good! Then we don't have to pick it up.” She said with glee.

I quickly followed with, “Though the more he eats the larger he gets. He will eventually turn into a Godzilla bug that will consume the earth and all that remains.” She stooped down to pick up her lollipop wrapper and placed it in her tiny jacket pocket.

You could imagine the look in her eyes when she visualized this creature. If not, picture her screaming the night before as a tiny ant marched along the side of the bathtub as she stewed in a pot of bubbles and barbies. The ant never knew the power he held in that moment. Had he wanted to, he could have ruled the world. Though I came to her rescue before he realized his grand abilities.

I think about the stories that shaped my fears. The way rules were set with tales of the boogie men and closet creatures.

“Make sure you fall asleep before midnight because you will get sick.” Mom would say. Regretfully, I believed that until my early twenties.

“Santa will not bring you toys if you are bad, he will bring you a large lump of coal.” I now realize coal would have been much more useful than the plastic tiny toys that probably sit crumbled on the bottom shelf of a thrift store, over-reused-over-recycled.

“If you swim right after eating you will get a cramp and drown.” I knew I wouldn't really drown because I am a fabulous swimmer and never minded the cramps.

I worry about the day she calls my bluff as I have with my mother so many times. I'm afraid one day she will ask me what the tiny bug who consumes litter looks like. In her little mind the only way to avoid it is to name it, put a face to the name, and squash it when she has the chance (or run). I'd imagine her choosing the latter. I will be forced to reveal the truth. Or maybe I will paint a teensy little bug on a large white background because if I'm anything like my mother, I would go all in. If you look close enough it will be a purple blot of ink with tiny antennae. There will be little black curved lines like quotations surrounding the antennae as if they are sending out sonic waves searching for trash (and children).

Her face will freeze, and she will bravely say, "Well that's not very scary" whilst looking from corner to corner to see if there are any signs of the tiny purple bug. I will then be forced to elaborate on this trash eating creature. Deep down I will wonder if I am somehow doing her a disservice as her mother. This moment will pass fleetingly as I imagine the laugh her grandmother and I will have at dinner that night. I'll crack my fingers in a way that tells her I mean business. Stretching to approach the drawing board, large sheets of paper taped to the living room wall, I will be coming up with my next plan of action. The blot of purple ink will be slightly larger, this time with little black lines across body and slightly larger antennae going about ferociously. An image of a Hershey's bar wrapper will appear in the distance (her favorite candy bar). Little pinchers will form near it's head and it's belly will look full and round.

She'll possibly start to doubt my story of the enlarged trash eating bug. I will have to step up my game. She will eventually want to see the Godzilla sized version of this tiny purple blot of ink with black stripes and active antennae. Eventually I will spill purple ink on the wall sized piece of paper. I will then paint the black stripes along its belly, and give it hairy roach-like legs and talons on its buggy feet. I'll have to mix some grays and whites in with the purple blot because she really likes the color purple and I want this to be scary, not friendly and ready to sing a tune.

I'll consider adding more legs. She hates spiders. Instantly, it will have ten legs extending from its abdomen, centipede-esque and spider-like. I'll draw an egg sac beneath its butt, because what is a scary bug without promises of scary bug babies left to take over the world? The antennae will be the size of light poles and larger pinchers will form along its head, sharp and world-ending. I will paint a glare along the rim of the pinchers, so they look snappish and metallic. The large beady eyes will be painted with black and the whites of its eyes will be centered and focused on the observers, me, my daughter, the world.

I think it's important to get crafty here. The eyes are where things can go all wrong. It's the difference between Disney and Goosebumps. I will find shards of a broken mirror from my craft box and use it as a mosaic on its cornea. Its eyes will be mirrors angled toward the floor where we stand holding our trash and it will appear ravenous and searching. Our trash will no longer interest it. It will realize that we humans are the source and will want to consume each and every one of us, an image of hunger-lust in its mirrored eyes. Our fear will reflect back at us as we face our doom. I'll paint drool the color of blood leaking from its pinchers, and a gaping black mouth with inward angled fangs toward the back. No uvula. That feels too human and friendly. Perhaps I will throw in a word bubble coming from its belly of someone within screaming "HELP!" because she can read four letter words now and that would be effective.

I will snap a picture of her without her knowing and print it on my HP Photo Smart that I got last week. I'll cut out her image as she stares at the giant Godzilla trash eater turned human eater. I'll paste it at the lowest corner of the paper to show how massive this creature is to us humans and collect some garbage from the trash bin to make it look like 3D art on the wall. This will make it seem more real.

"Mom. Are you done with your art project?" She said with the realization that I am completely in over my head. I threw my hands down to my sides, my overalls stained with purple

ink, broken shards of mirror and more glue than I could fathom. She handed me my cup of tea that had gotten cold since I made it that morning and sat on the couch flipping through her favorite shows on Netflix. A piece of collected trash that was pasted to the paper on the wall fell off, the glue not completely dried. Her eyes flicked to the garbage then anxiously from corner to corner. She ran to pick it up and put it securely beneath the trash bin lid. I took a sip of my tea and smiled to myself not necessarily proud, but not ashamed either.

My name is Benny the Banana

I was born in the tropics,

Not the Sahara

And shipped to QFC,

Where a lovely student bought me.

Lucas ate me for lunch,

I filled him a bunch,

And then he threw me in a garbage can.

Damn!

Through a plastic bag I screamed "Wait!

You must not know who I am!"

He rolled the bin to the street,

And on Sunday (this isn't neat)

They threw me on a train to Oregon.

Oregon? Oregon!

Now I'm in a dump,

Squished into a lump.

Stuck between bricks and Styrofoam,

A long, long way from home.

My name is Benny the Banana

I was born in the tropics,

Not the Sahara

And shipped to QFC,

Where a lovely student bought me.

Dee ate me for breakfast,

I made her happy to exist.

And then she threw me in the compost.

Trust me- I smiled the most!

Her roommate (clever like a fox)

took me outside to a dark, black box.

Worms chewed-up my peel,

And pooped me out (I swear- for real).

Now I'm rich, sweet black dirt

(I know it's hot- try not to flirt).

Tomorrow a tulip will spring out of me,

And I'll continue my life with glee.

I'll look up at the sky,

And now you know why.