

A person's legs and feet in dark boots are seen from a high angle, hanging from the edge of a large, reddish-brown rock over a vast desert canyon. The canyon floor is filled with rugged, layered rock formations and a winding, light-colored dirt road that leads into the distance. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is one of adventure and exploration.

# LOST & FOUND

*A PUBLICATION OF THE UWHARRIE DREAMS CREATIVE WRITING CLUB*





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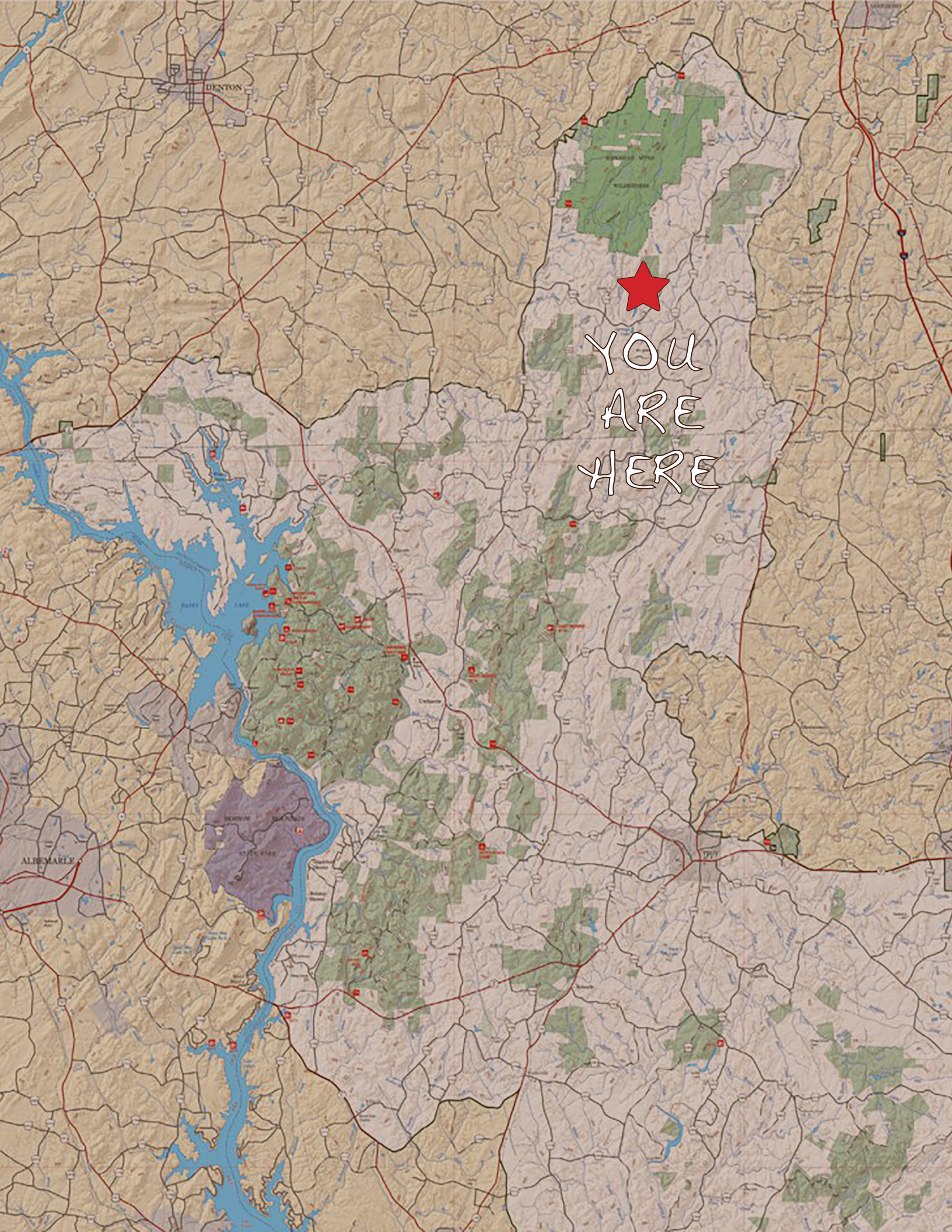
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All collected works were named “Best of the Best” in their genre categories in the 2019 Uwharrie Dreams Creative Writing Contest. Congratulations to our winners.





YOU  
ARE  
HERE





SUMMER LEE

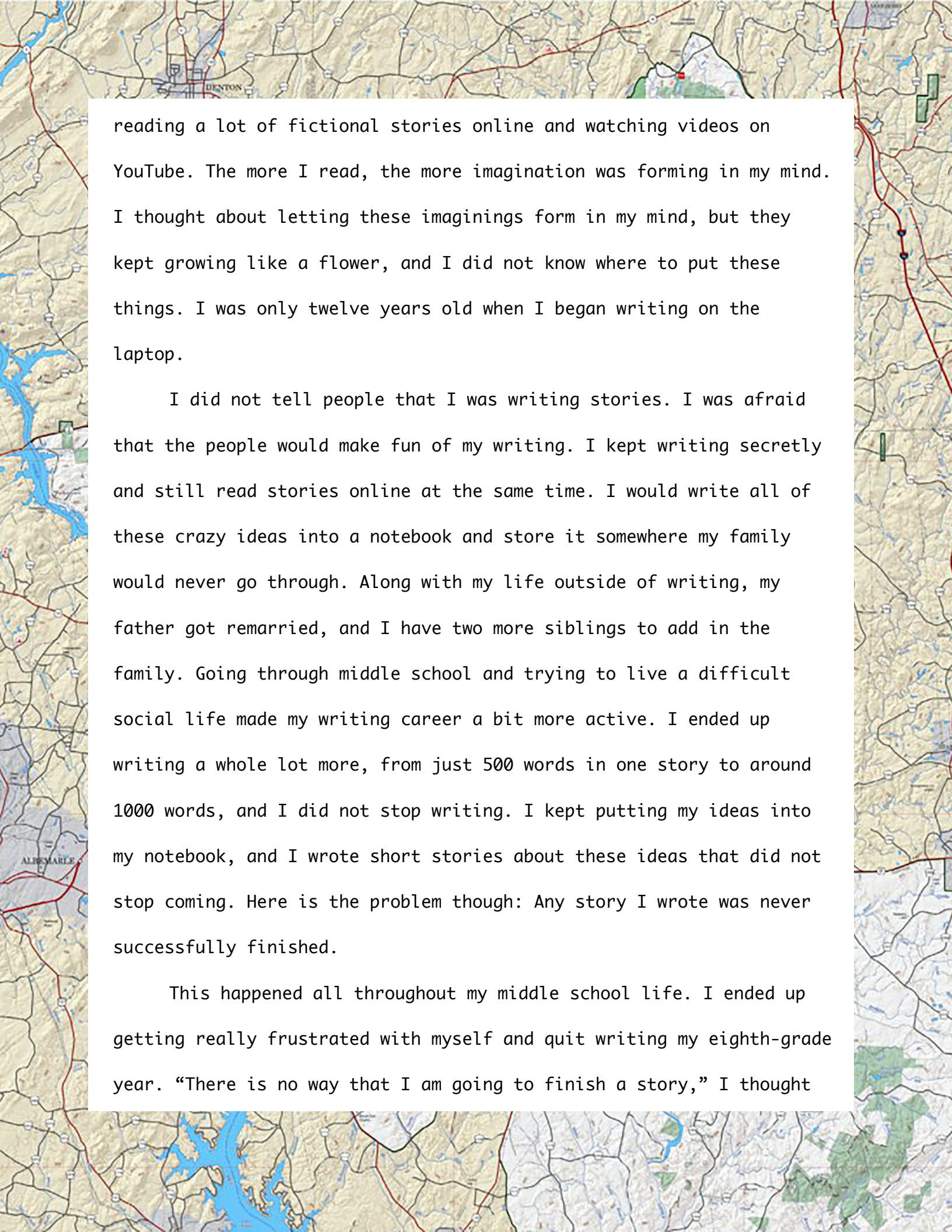
## *Into My Imagination*

Leo Tolstoy once said, “True life is lived when tiny changes occur.” I never really thought of that quote at all. When I think about life, it is just people who are living a normal life, with a little bit of craziness in it. When I was a young child, I thought everyone just lived a normal life with the same schedule: get up, get ready for work or school, then go to work or school, and then come home, eat supper, and go to bed, and go all over again every single day. That is what my father did, but my mom was a housewife, and she took care of me and three other siblings. Everything, well, to me, was going completely good, until that one winter morning...

My mother passed away unexpectedly that morning. It was devastating to all of my family. I never thought my mom would leave us too soon, but she was gone, like a bubble flowing into the air and it pops. This was not a tiny change; it was a huge change in my life. My whole life changed before my eyes, and it changed who I was, mentally and physically.

After my mom passed, my father bought a laptop for everyone to use. We already had a computer, but my father wanted a laptop just in case the computer was taken. I ended up using the laptop, a lot. I was



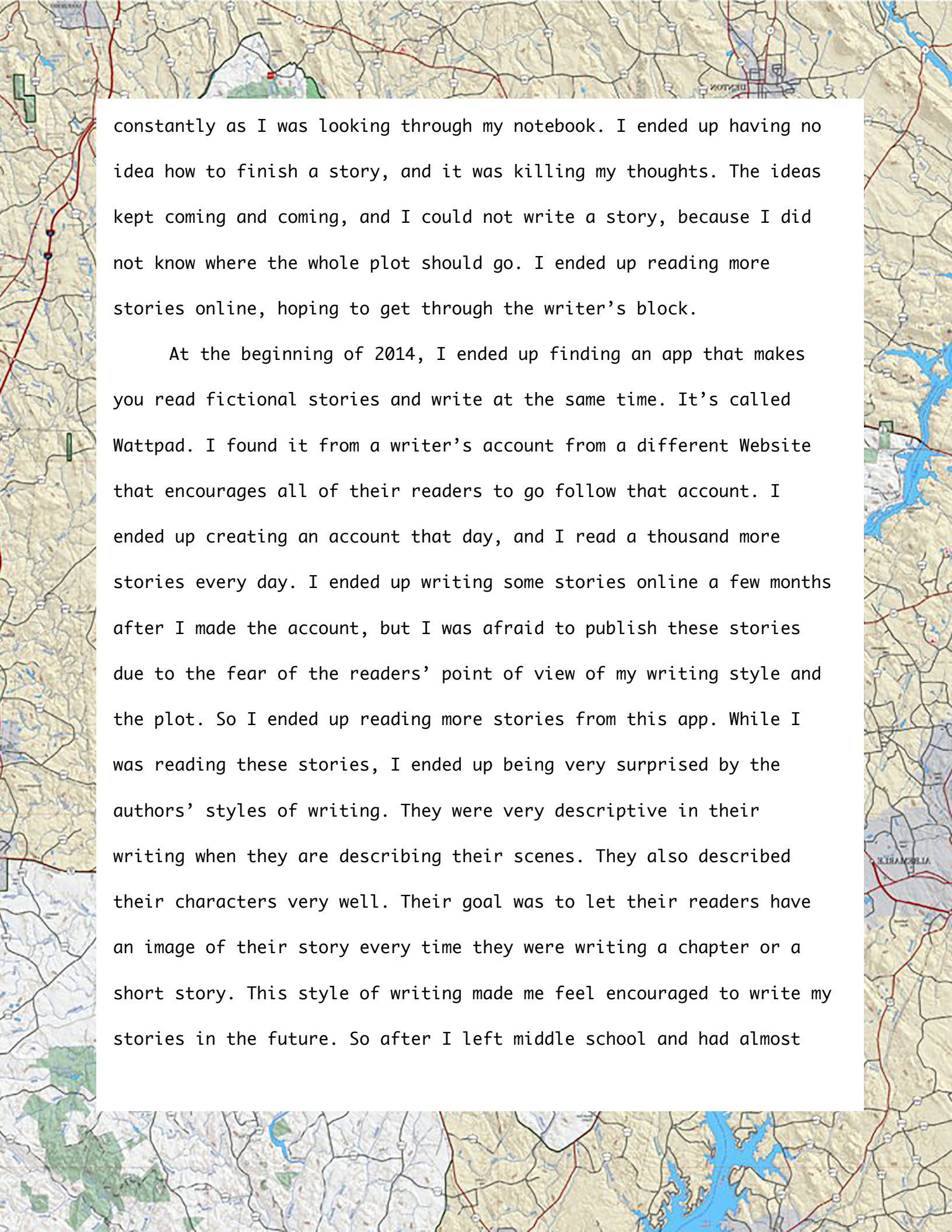


reading a lot of fictional stories online and watching videos on YouTube. The more I read, the more imagination was forming in my mind. I thought about letting these imaginings form in my mind, but they kept growing like a flower, and I did not know where to put these things. I was only twelve years old when I began writing on the laptop.

I did not tell people that I was writing stories. I was afraid that the people would make fun of my writing. I kept writing secretly and still read stories online at the same time. I would write all of these crazy ideas into a notebook and store it somewhere my family would never go through. Along with my life outside of writing, my father got remarried, and I have two more siblings to add in the family. Going through middle school and trying to live a difficult social life made my writing career a bit more active. I ended up writing a whole lot more, from just 500 words in one story to around 1000 words, and I did not stop writing. I kept putting my ideas into my notebook, and I wrote short stories about these ideas that did not stop coming. Here is the problem though: Any story I wrote was never successfully finished.

This happened all throughout my middle school life. I ended up getting really frustrated with myself and quit writing my eighth-grade year. "There is no way that I am going to finish a story," I thought

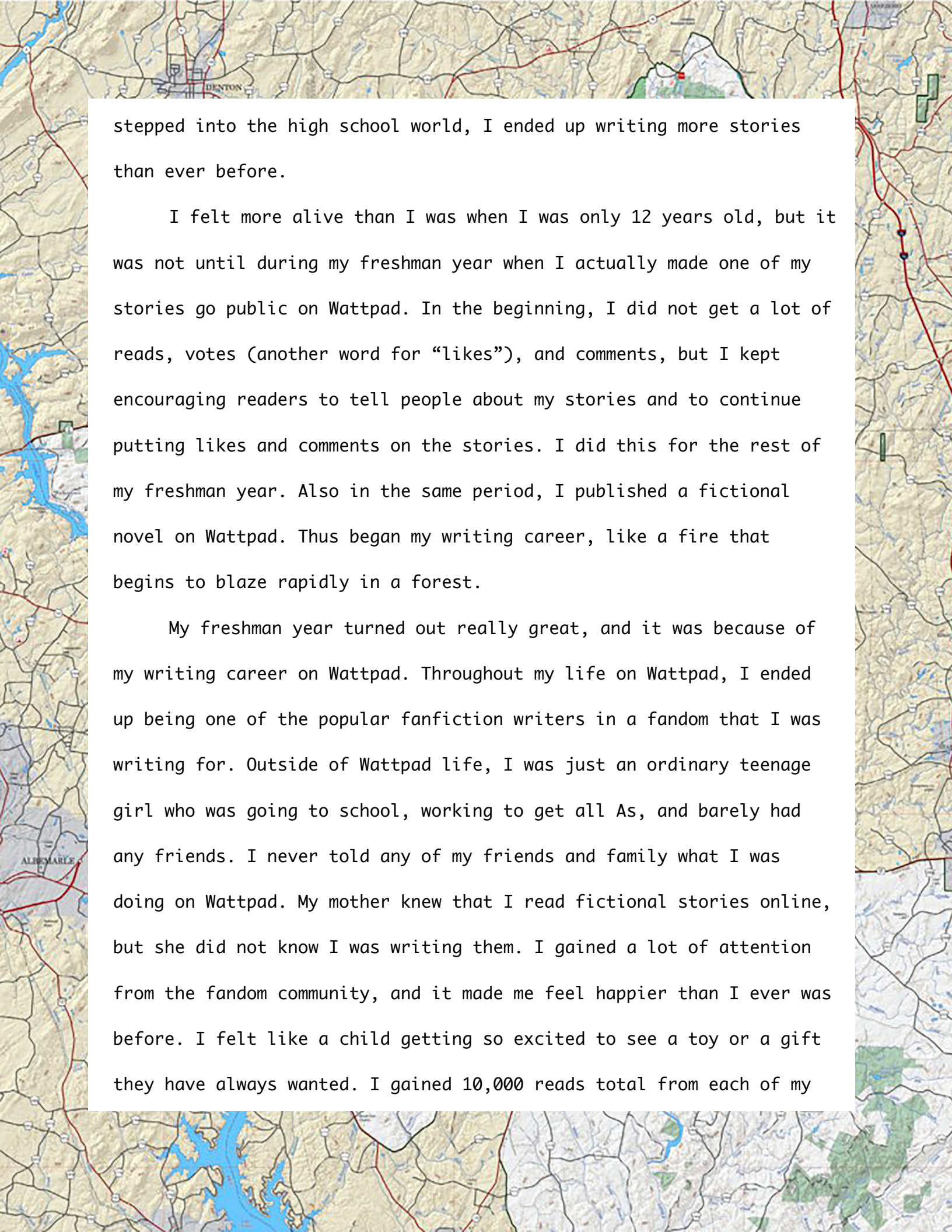




constantly as I was looking through my notebook. I ended up having no idea how to finish a story, and it was killing my thoughts. The ideas kept coming and coming, and I could not write a story, because I did not know where the whole plot should go. I ended up reading more stories online, hoping to get through the writer's block.

At the beginning of 2014, I ended up finding an app that makes you read fictional stories and write at the same time. It's called Wattpad. I found it from a writer's account from a different Website that encourages all of their readers to go follow that account. I ended up creating an account that day, and I read a thousand more stories every day. I ended up writing some stories online a few months after I made the account, but I was afraid to publish these stories due to the fear of the readers' point of view of my writing style and the plot. So I ended up reading more stories from this app. While I was reading these stories, I ended up being very surprised by the authors' styles of writing. They were very descriptive in their writing when they are describing their scenes. They also described their characters very well. Their goal was to let their readers have an image of their story every time they were writing a chapter or a short story. This style of writing made me feel encouraged to write my stories in the future. So after I left middle school and had almost



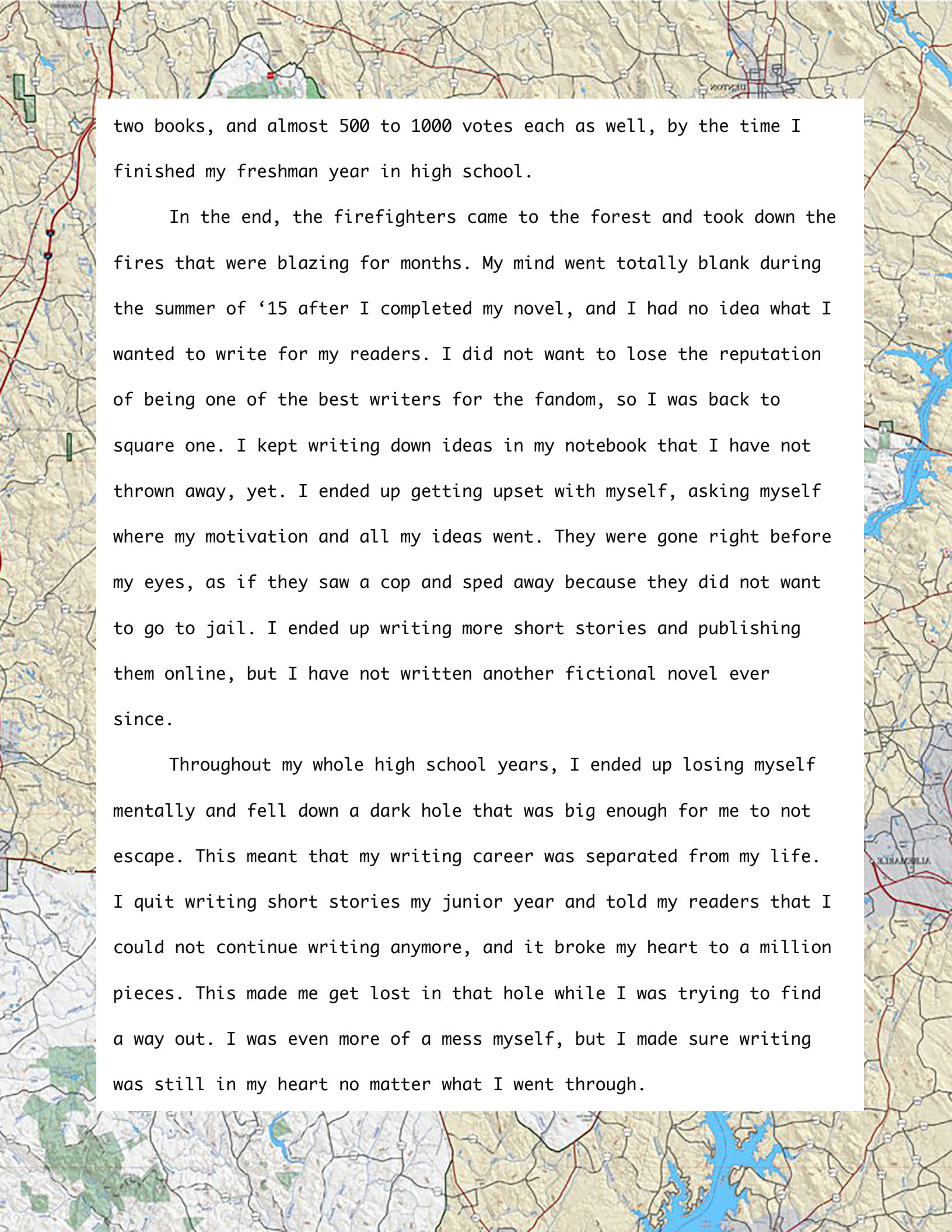


stepped into the high school world, I ended up writing more stories than ever before.

I felt more alive than I was when I was only 12 years old, but it was not until during my freshman year when I actually made one of my stories go public on Wattpad. In the beginning, I did not get a lot of reads, votes (another word for “likes”), and comments, but I kept encouraging readers to tell people about my stories and to continue putting likes and comments on the stories. I did this for the rest of my freshman year. Also in the same period, I published a fictional novel on Wattpad. Thus began my writing career, like a fire that begins to blaze rapidly in a forest.

My freshman year turned out really great, and it was because of my writing career on Wattpad. Throughout my life on Wattpad, I ended up being one of the popular fanfiction writers in a fandom that I was writing for. Outside of Wattpad life, I was just an ordinary teenage girl who was going to school, working to get all As, and barely had any friends. I never told any of my friends and family what I was doing on Wattpad. My mother knew that I read fictional stories online, but she did not know I was writing them. I gained a lot of attention from the fandom community, and it made me feel happier than I ever was before. I felt like a child getting so excited to see a toy or a gift they have always wanted. I gained 10,000 reads total from each of my



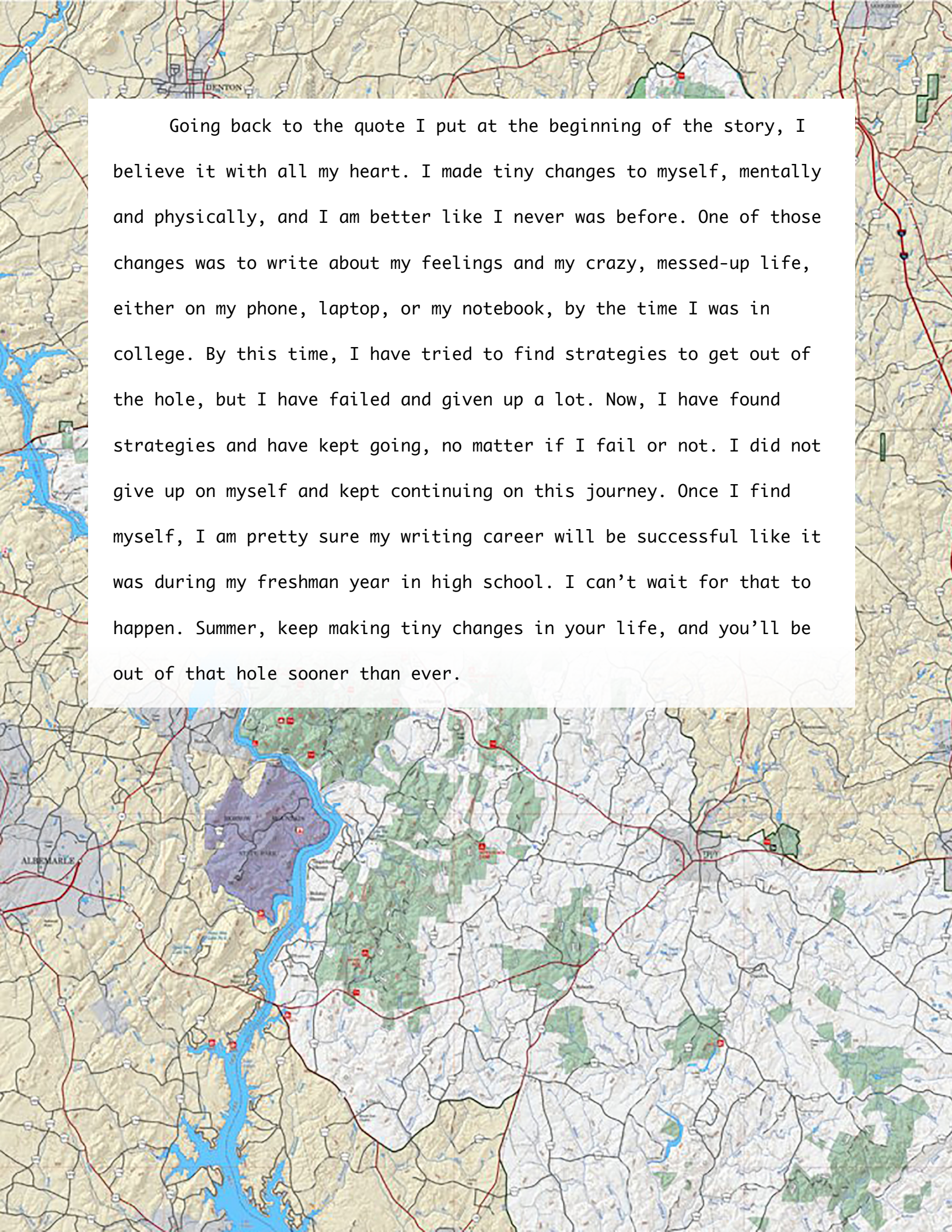


two books, and almost 500 to 1000 votes each as well, by the time I finished my freshman year in high school.

In the end, the firefighters came to the forest and took down the fires that were blazing for months. My mind went totally blank during the summer of '15 after I completed my novel, and I had no idea what I wanted to write for my readers. I did not want to lose the reputation of being one of the best writers for the fandom, so I was back to square one. I kept writing down ideas in my notebook that I have not thrown away, yet. I ended up getting upset with myself, asking myself where my motivation and all my ideas went. They were gone right before my eyes, as if they saw a cop and sped away because they did not want to go to jail. I ended up writing more short stories and publishing them online, but I have not written another fictional novel ever since.

Throughout my whole high school years, I ended up losing myself mentally and fell down a dark hole that was big enough for me to not escape. This meant that my writing career was separated from my life. I quit writing short stories my junior year and told my readers that I could not continue writing anymore, and it broke my heart to a million pieces. This made me get lost in that hole while I was trying to find a way out. I was even more of a mess myself, but I made sure writing was still in my heart no matter what I went through.





Going back to the quote I put at the beginning of the story, I believe it with all my heart. I made tiny changes to myself, mentally and physically, and I am better like I never was before. One of those changes was to write about my feelings and my crazy, messed-up life, either on my phone, laptop, or my notebook, by the time I was in college. By this time, I have tried to find strategies to get out of the hole, but I have failed and given up a lot. Now, I have found strategies and have kept going, no matter if I fail or not. I did not give up on myself and kept continuing on this journey. Once I find myself, I am pretty sure my writing career will be successful like it was during my freshman year in high school. I can't wait for that to happen. Summer, keep making tiny changes in your life, and you'll be out of that hole sooner than ever.





SARAH HURLEY

## *The Thing We Humans Call "Hope"*

A pile of little pills sits atop the kitchen counter—

You count them

You consider

You recall

*mama mama please listen because no one else will—*

*everybody says not to break the silence when it's golden but mama*

*all I see is black*

*swallowing up the bird's chirp in the morning and the moon's shine at night*

*and filling my lungs with something that's much too thick to be air—*

*glass shatters back behind me*

*ringing, ringing in my ears and*

*all I know is that the gun felt far too heavy in my hands but so did the*

*weight of the world on my shoulders oh god—*

*the blood ((boiling, scalding, coursing through my veins))*

*dulls every nerve in my body when*

*I think of how I don't know why*

*my heart was always left for dead on the side of the road*

*like a lonely, soggy single shoe*

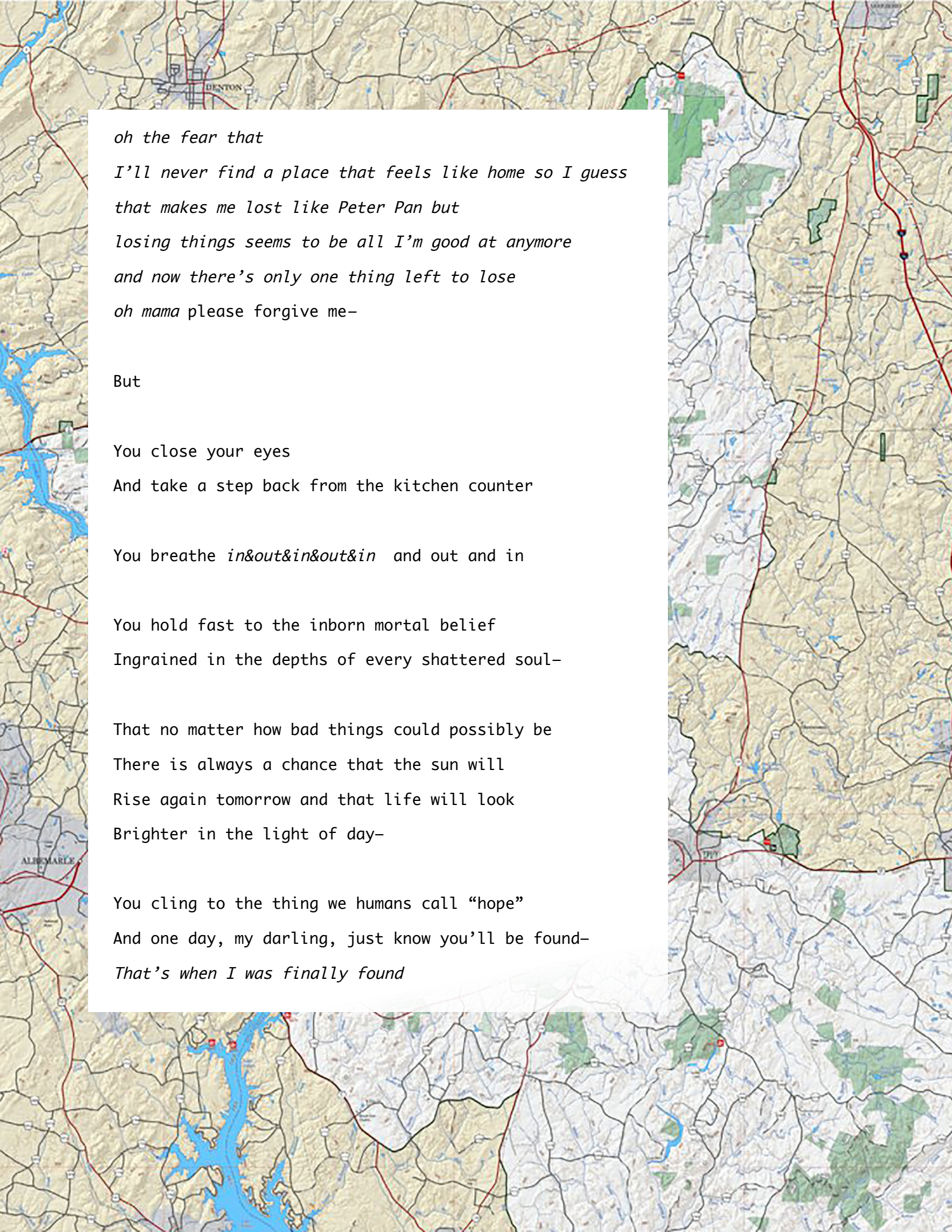
*by people who were far too fluent in hollow apologies to care*

*and oh mama I know this all sounds like madness but it's the only*

*way I thought I could describe*

*the ache inside my soul and the fear*





*oh the fear that  
I'll never find a place that feels like home so I guess  
that makes me lost like Peter Pan but  
losing things seems to be all I'm good at anymore  
and now there's only one thing left to lose  
oh mama please forgive me-*

But

You close your eyes  
And take a step back from the kitchen counter

You breathe *in&out&in&out&in* and out and in

You hold fast to the inborn mortal belief  
Ingrained in the depths of every shattered soul-

That no matter how bad things could possibly be  
There is always a chance that the sun will  
Rise again tomorrow and that life will look  
Brighter in the light of day-

You cling to the thing we humans call "hope"  
And one day, my darling, just know you'll be found-  
*That's when I was finally found*





ALYSSA SEE

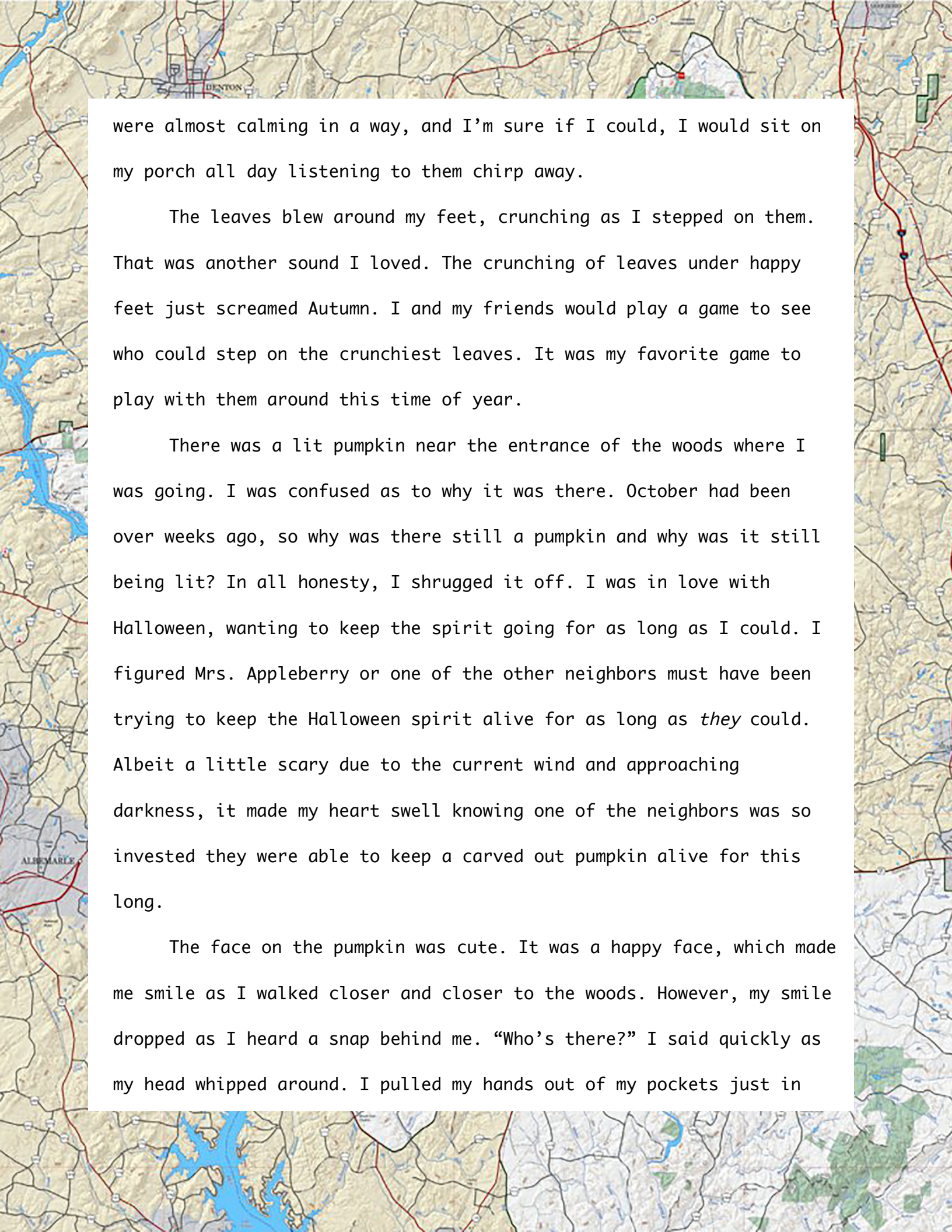
## *Lost 'n Found*

“Sally, where are you going? Dinner is almost ready, Honey,” I could hear my mom say from the kitchen as I slipped on my shoes, tying them carefully in a double knot as tight as I could.

“I know, Mom! I’ll just be a minute, and then I’ll be ready to eat,” I replied, slipping my heavy coat on. It was autumn. Mid-November was approaching slowly but surely, and it was starting to get extremely cold out. The sun was setting, the sky turning dark blue as pink and orange spread throughout the clouds. It was always such a pretty sight. My favorite sight to be exact.

Mom replied shortly, giving a small hum of confirmation that she heard me. I swung the door open; it pushed quite harshly as the wind started to pick up. I shivered, leaning up once more to grab my scarf off of the coat rack. I wrapped it securely around my neck, pulling it up to cover my mouth. I shut the door carefully, wandering off my front porch and down the rickety old stairs that creak whenever you step. The wind chimes on my neighbor Mrs. Appleberry’s porch crashed together, letting out a loud harmony. I always liked the wind chimes Mrs. Appleberry had up, much to my mom’s dismay. Mom was never a fan of loud noise, but to me the wind chimes were more than that. They





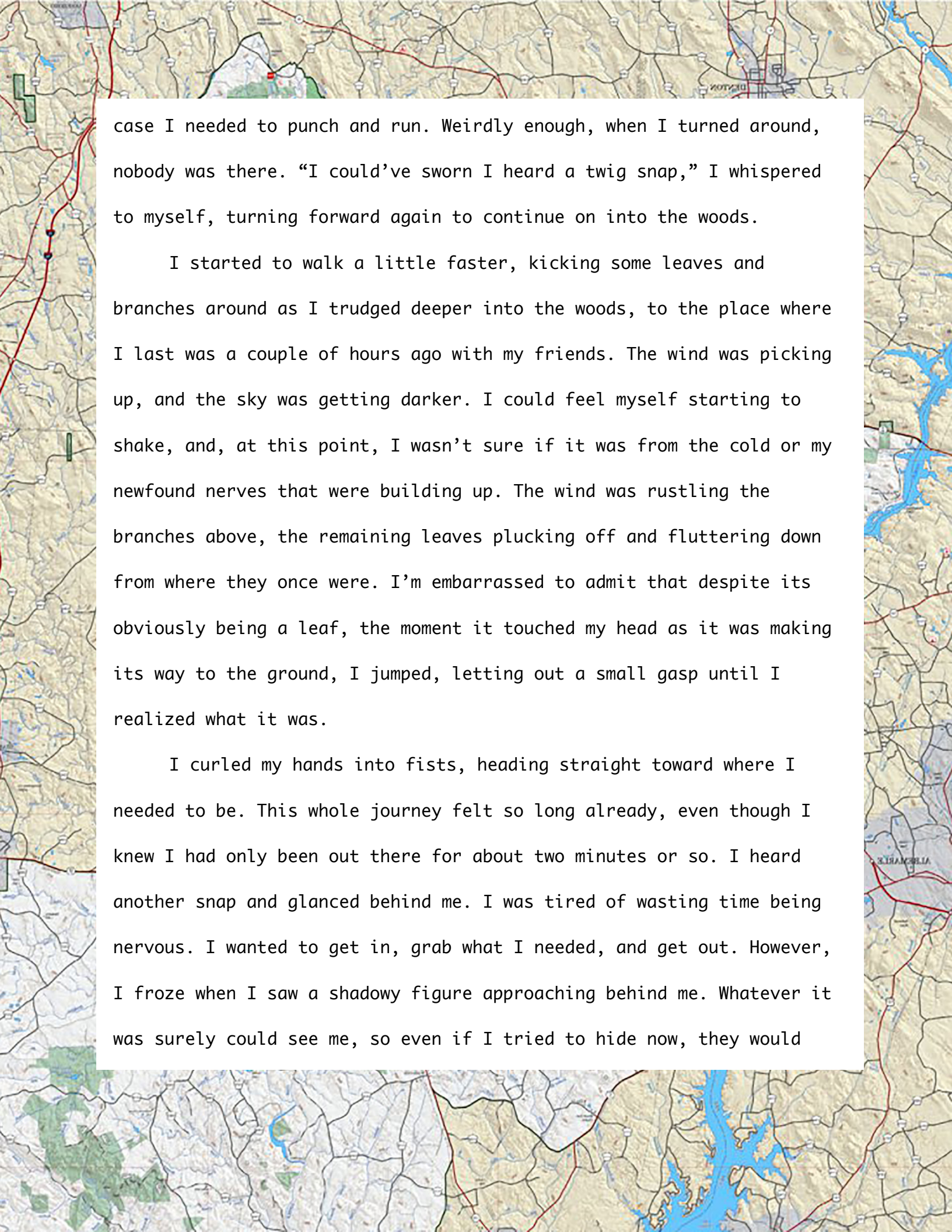
were almost calming in a way, and I'm sure if I could, I would sit on my porch all day listening to them chirp away.

The leaves blew around my feet, crunching as I stepped on them. That was another sound I loved. The crunching of leaves under happy feet just screamed Autumn. I and my friends would play a game to see who could step on the crunchiest leaves. It was my favorite game to play with them around this time of year.

There was a lit pumpkin near the entrance of the woods where I was going. I was confused as to why it was there. October had been over weeks ago, so why was there still a pumpkin and why was it still being lit? In all honesty, I shrugged it off. I was in love with Halloween, wanting to keep the spirit going for as long as I could. I figured Mrs. Appleberry or one of the other neighbors must have been trying to keep the Halloween spirit alive for as long as *they* could. Albeit a little scary due to the current wind and approaching darkness, it made my heart swell knowing one of the neighbors was so invested they were able to keep a carved out pumpkin alive for this long.

The face on the pumpkin was cute. It was a happy face, which made me smile as I walked closer and closer to the woods. However, my smile dropped as I heard a snap behind me. "Who's there?" I said quickly as my head whipped around. I pulled my hands out of my pockets just in



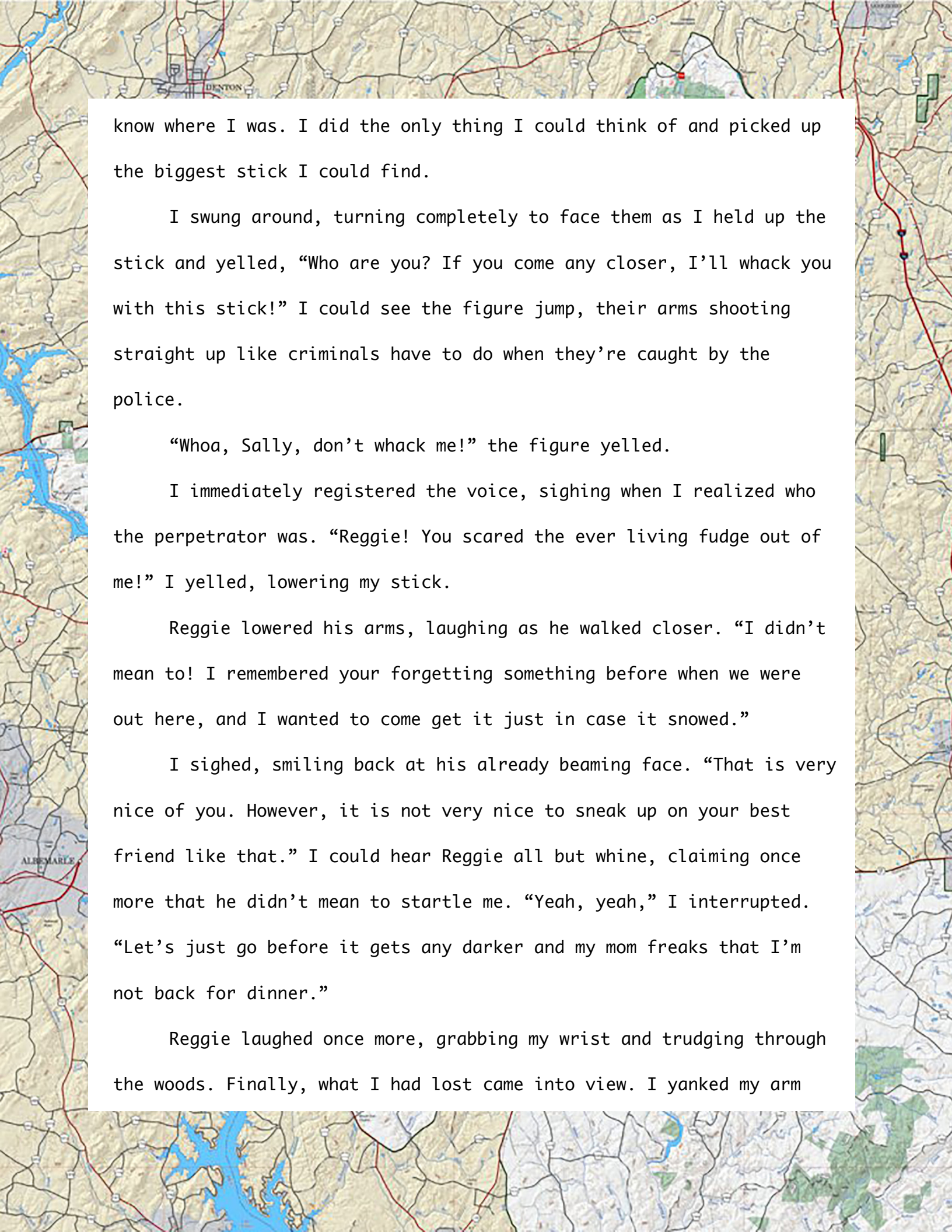


case I needed to punch and run. Weirdly enough, when I turned around, nobody was there. "I could've sworn I heard a twig snap," I whispered to myself, turning forward again to continue on into the woods.

I started to walk a little faster, kicking some leaves and branches around as I trudged deeper into the woods, to the place where I last was a couple of hours ago with my friends. The wind was picking up, and the sky was getting darker. I could feel myself starting to shake, and, at this point, I wasn't sure if it was from the cold or my newfound nerves that were building up. The wind was rustling the branches above, the remaining leaves plucking off and fluttering down from where they once were. I'm embarrassed to admit that despite its obviously being a leaf, the moment it touched my head as it was making its way to the ground, I jumped, letting out a small gasp until I realized what it was.

I curled my hands into fists, heading straight toward where I needed to be. This whole journey felt so long already, even though I knew I had only been out there for about two minutes or so. I heard another snap and glanced behind me. I was tired of wasting time being nervous. I wanted to get in, grab what I needed, and get out. However, I froze when I saw a shadowy figure approaching behind me. Whatever it was surely could see me, so even if I tried to hide now, they would





know where I was. I did the only thing I could think of and picked up the biggest stick I could find.

I swung around, turning completely to face them as I held up the stick and yelled, “Who are you? If you come any closer, I’ll whack you with this stick!” I could see the figure jump, their arms shooting straight up like criminals have to do when they’re caught by the police.

“Whoa, Sally, don’t whack me!” the figure yelled.

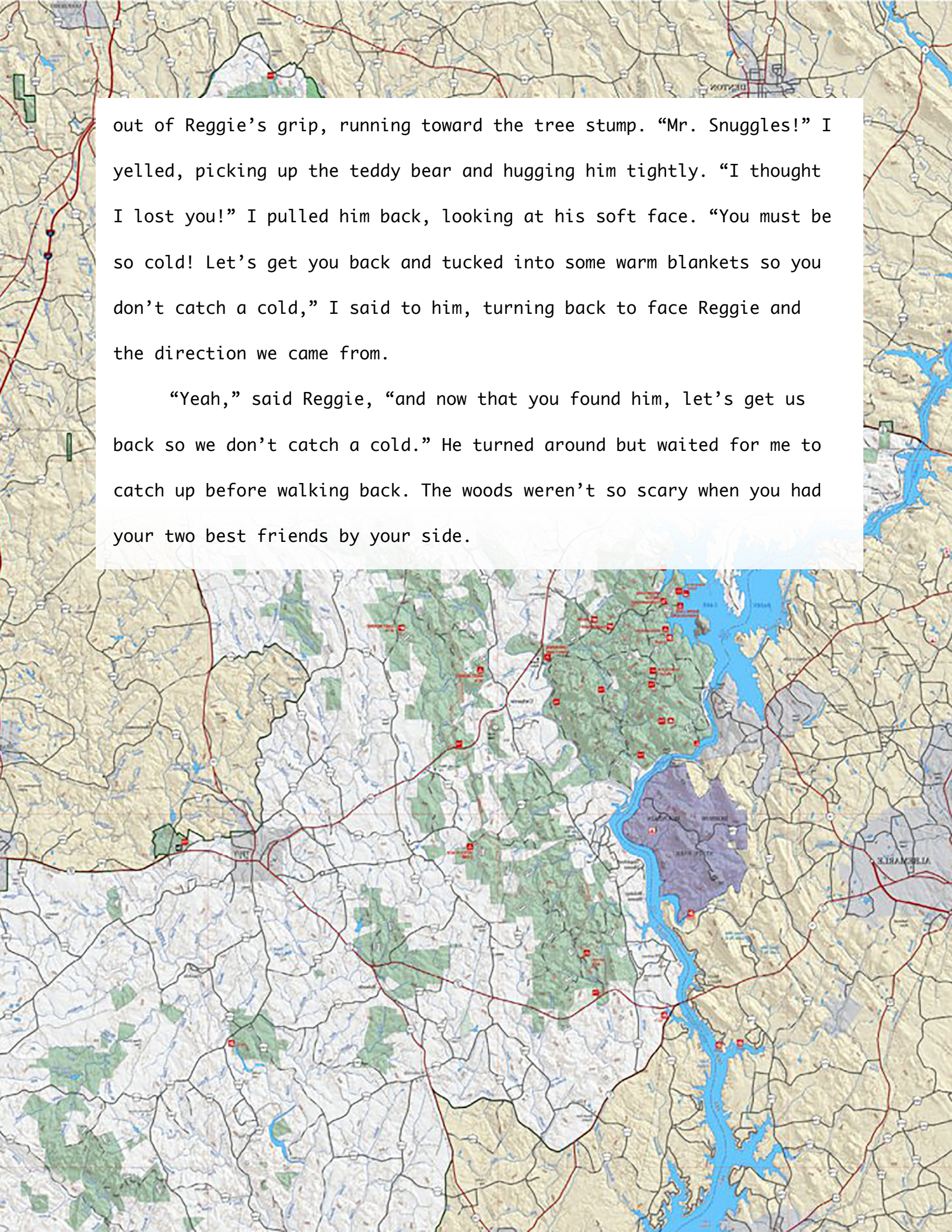
I immediately registered the voice, sighing when I realized who the perpetrator was. “Reggie! You scared the ever living fudge out of me!” I yelled, lowering my stick.

Reggie lowered his arms, laughing as he walked closer. “I didn’t mean to! I remembered your forgetting something before when we were out here, and I wanted to come get it just in case it snowed.”

I sighed, smiling back at his already beaming face. “That is very nice of you. However, it is not very nice to sneak up on your best friend like that.” I could hear Reggie all but whine, claiming once more that he didn’t mean to startle me. “Yeah, yeah,” I interrupted. “Let’s just go before it gets any darker and my mom freaks that I’m not back for dinner.”

Reggie laughed once more, grabbing my wrist and trudging through the woods. Finally, what I had lost came into view. I yanked my arm

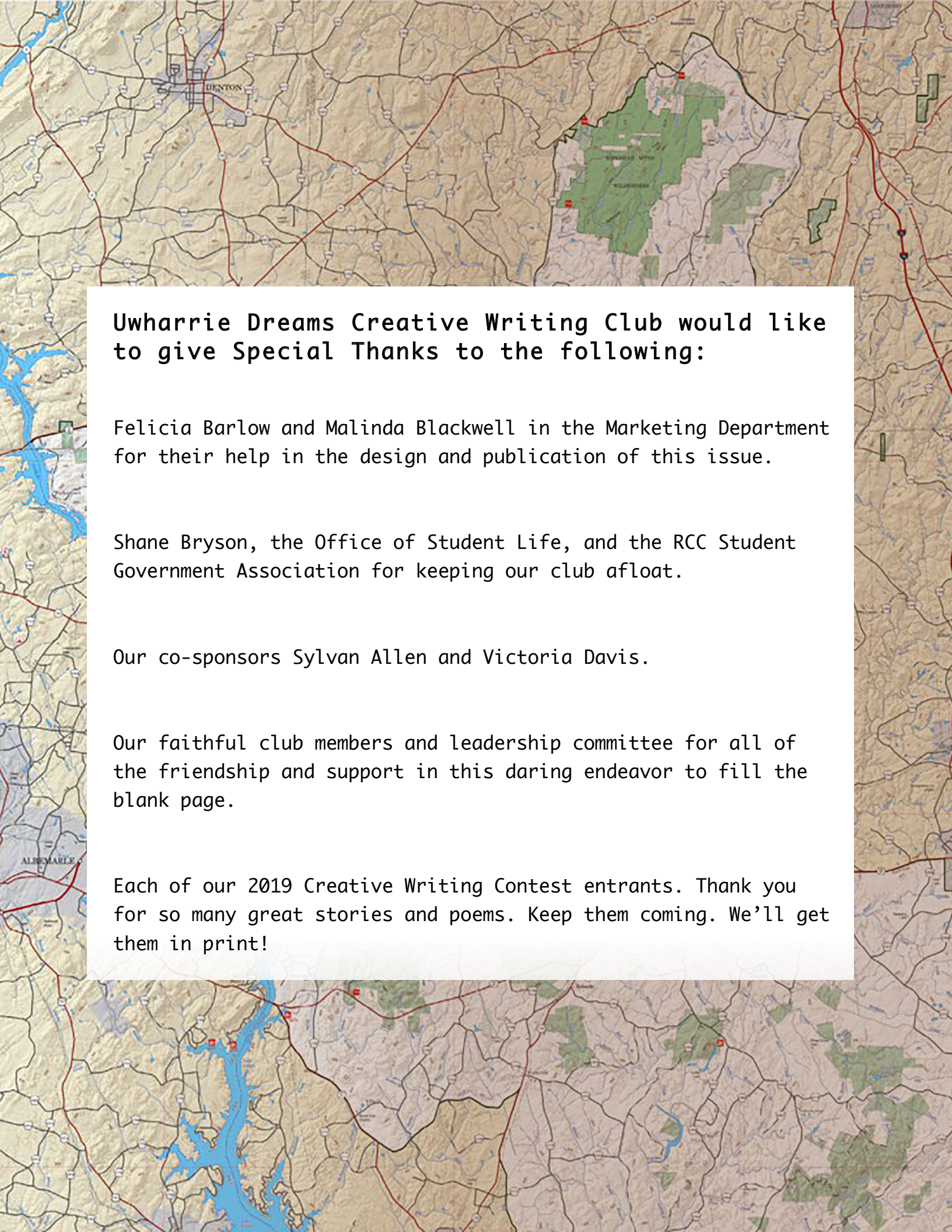




out of Reggie's grip, running toward the tree stump. "Mr. Snuggles!" I yelled, picking up the teddy bear and hugging him tightly. "I thought I lost you!" I pulled him back, looking at his soft face. "You must be so cold! Let's get you back and tucked into some warm blankets so you don't catch a cold," I said to him, turning back to face Reggie and the direction we came from.

"Yeah," said Reggie, "and now that you found him, let's get us back so we don't catch a cold." He turned around but waited for me to catch up before walking back. The woods weren't so scary when you had your two best friends by your side.





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