


Write On! 2020

A Presence of Hope

By Eli Van Dyke



I'm all alone, scared, nothing to do, and without my family! But I must prevail, one more night, then another, make it as long as I can. Through the pain of being alone, I remember when I was




little, my father told me when you get chosen don't run away, they will take care of you, well I wasn't a good listener.

This was my first night away from home, without the comfort and love of the boy. No food to eat. What have I gotten myself into? Well, there is one thing to do, get back home, but I can't when I'm lost like this. I think I have an idea of how to protect myself and find shelter, but I don't like it, the stink would be horrible. The dumpster is not the place for me.

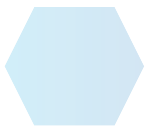
I have always lived in the suburbs, until the other day when my curiosity got the best of me. The door was wide open and all I had to do was just run, but part of me didn't want to. I had all the necessities, a good family, food to eat, water to drink, what else do I need? Well, my curiosity thought otherwise and I ran. I ran out, down the street, and through the alleys. Then a big machine slowly chugged by, its voice rang out with a chugga chugga choo choo, and then I saw my chance. I jumped and landed on one of the big machines' platforms. I fell asleep until it screeched and stopped. Why did it stop, did a man stop the big machine? Well, no time for thoughts, I must keep on going. So I jumped off the machine and continued on my journey. As I traveled along, I saw tall buildings, but very few trees and grass. There were no people, well other than the few people wearing masks, no one was together, no one was talking, what has happened to this world?

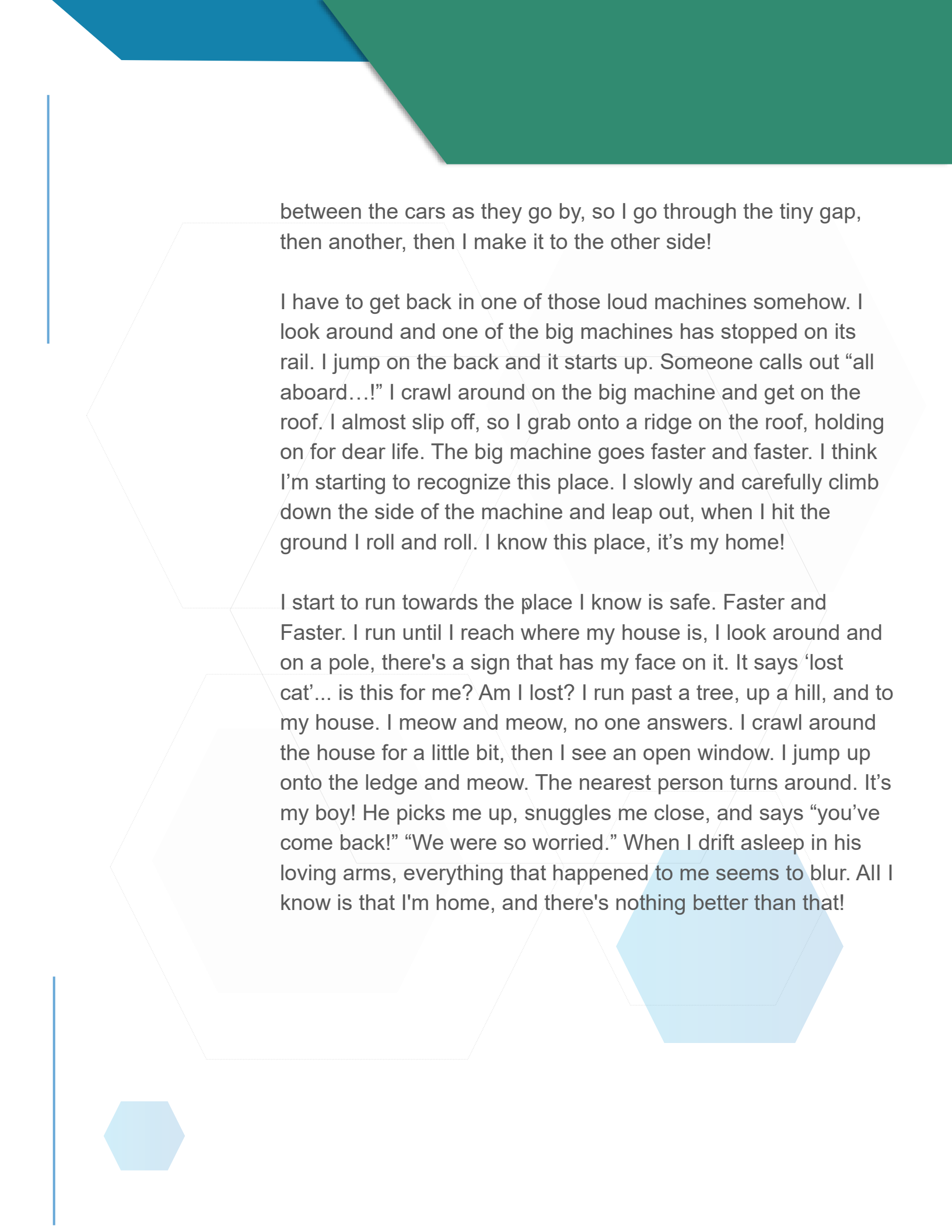
Back to my idea of where to sleep, a dumpster. It would shield me from the wind. I think it might work, so I creep around a corner down an alley and next to the giant box. How will I get



in? I try pounding at it, it does not open, I try jumping on it, it does not open. Then I get an idea. Taking a stick while pushing it open with my back, I slowly jab the stick in the big box, it does not fall out. I jump and land on the edge of the stick, the lid jolts up and... slams against the wall and falls back down and cracks the stick in half. Well, there goes that plan! I guess I'll sleep outside. I burrow in the trash on the ground, while only leaving a hole to stick my head out. I wriggle around for a bit, kicking, trying to get good sleep. Then something covers me, all I see is darkness. I'm thrown to the ground, and I remember no more.

I wake up feeling groggy and hear rumbling in a truck. I run forward and... BAM... I hit some sort of invisible wall...I feel dizzy, I hear the boy call my name. I run again, and again, next time when I run at the wall I fall asleep, with a sharp pain in my head. When I finally wake up I can barely move. The truck has stopped and a person picks me up. I deliver a bite in his arm. I fight against him, scratching, biting, he drops me and I run. His net misses me and I escape, down an alley, up a wall, through some ladders. I run and run until I am on the roof of a giant building. I look around, smoke filling the air around me, I think I'm in the city. It's dusk, so 7 hours until tomorrow. I need to get home! I walk around the top of the building, I see the people with their nets coming up the ladders. I see an opening and run to it, down the ladder through their legs and onto the sidewalk. I'm going straight.... then woosh. A car goes right by my face just missing me. I have to make it across the road, but how? Another car goes by, there seems to be a couple of gaps





between the cars as they go by, so I go through the tiny gap, then another, then I make it to the other side!

I have to get back in one of those loud machines somehow. I look around and one of the big machines has stopped on its rail. I jump on the back and it starts up. Someone calls out “all aboard...!” I crawl around on the big machine and get on the roof. I almost slip off, so I grab onto a ridge on the roof, holding on for dear life. The big machine goes faster and faster. I think I’m starting to recognize this place. I slowly and carefully climb down the side of the machine and leap out, when I hit the ground I roll and roll. I know this place, it’s my home!

I start to run towards the place I know is safe. Faster and Faster. I run until I reach where my house is, I look around and on a pole, there's a sign that has my face on it. It says ‘lost cat’... is this for me? Am I lost? I run past a tree, up a hill, and to my house. I meow and meow, no one answers. I crawl around the house for a little bit, then I see an open window. I jump up onto the ledge and meow. The nearest person turns around. It’s my boy! He picks me up, snuggles me close, and says “you’ve come back!” “We were so worried.” When I drift asleep in his loving arms, everything that happened to me seems to blur. All I know is that I’m home, and there's nothing better than that!

