

September, 2013



*Sylvan Smith is a writer with a fertile imagination and an impressive ability to assemble words into stories. He has filled scores of notebooks in longhand with science fiction, fantasy, mythological and historical accounts, and hopes one day to find a publisher. Reading one of his stories, you get the sense that Sylvan was almost there at the battle scene. His imagery is that good.*

Sylvan (legal first name is Daniel) is an 11<sup>th</sup> grader at Fairborn Digital Academy. He says plot ideas for his stories “just come to him.” He has always loved history, so he writes a lot of historical fiction. One of the recurring themes in his stories is about courage. His philosophy is, “when in the face of overwhelming doom, you might as well do something to define yourself.” The heroes he creates reflect exceptional bravery.

Perhaps one of the characteristics that compels his writing is that Sylvan feels great empathy for others. “When I look in people’s eyes I can see and feel what they are feeling,” he says. “Wanting to help people.... I just can’t help it. I feel the pain of others and want to make everything better for them.” He is very proud of his family’s military background. “My uncles were in the Air Force and the Marines,” he says. I was in ROTC at the high school. I loved ROTC; it was my favorite class at the time, but I do like the school here; it’s right for me,” he declares.

Part of Sylvan’s loyalty to Fairborn Digital Academy is due to caring teachers who are encouraging him to keep writing. “Miss Dixon gave me a book on writing, and Mr. Wright helps when I get stuck on a story. He helped me in a major way get out of a plot jam in one of my stories. I really appreciate their help and encouragement ... and I like that it’s quieter here, and I can concentrate.” Sylvan’s mother, Lois is also very encouraging, but she sometimes worries that, at age 16, he isn’t enjoying his teenage years. “She says the years go by in about five seconds, so make the most of it,” he laughs.

Sylvan wants to go to college and study to be a therapist or a hospice worker. “I feel those occupations would suit my personality because I like to help people. But I also want to write, and maybe someday get published.” He will try for any scholarships or grants that are available for bright students who need financial help. In the meantime, he is working on a casual basis for a local contractor, and looking for a job...”any job,” he says. We just can’t help but believe he will find one.