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Sanguis Sanguinem Habebit.

Aidan Scully

Taunton High School, aidan.robert.scully@gmail.com

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CANE Student Writing Contest Winner

2020 Topic

Facing Adversity in the Ancient World

Herodotus tells us in the first book of his *Histories* that when Solon, the leader of Athens, visited Croesus, the incredibly rich king of Lydia in Anatolia, the king asked Solon who he thought was the happiest and most prosperous. Croesus thought Solon would say “You are, O Croesus, because of your great wealth.” But Solon replied instead that he would count no man happy until his death, because misery and suffering can befall anyone, no matter how wealthy or happy they seem (*Histories* 1.30-2).

There is ample evidence that people of all ancient cultures had to face many challenges and adversities in life. When one considers the relatively short life spans of men and women in the ancient world, it is clear that there were many obstacles to a long or easy life in the thousand-year period we study, from roughly 500 B.C.E. to 500 C.E. Our ancient writers tell us of diseases, plagues, invasions by hostile armies, piracy, enslavement, crime, death in childbirth, and countless other realities that made life difficult and strenuous.

For this writing contest: provide your own short story, poem, essay, or dialogue on the topic of dealing with or facing adversity in the ancient world. Your project will be judged holistically, based on how successfully you address the given topic, how well you engage your reader, and how well you write as you present your idea. Deadline for submission: December 15, 2020.

Guidelines for Students (please note all these):

- Your project may be a short story, poem, drama, or essay.
- Maximum length: 700 words.
- Your project should not be hand-written. Please provide a typed document.
- If you use any source materials for this project, you must provide a bibliography with specific references.
- Your name should not appear on the project itself.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals has placed this program on the 2020-2021 NASSP List of Approved Contests, Programs, and Activities for Students.

Sanguis Sanguinem Habebit.

AIDAN SCULLY

They overtook the open square,
A new dominion to declare,
With panic piercing through the air,
The fear could not be missed.
But hope was fear's eternal foe,
And hope could not be let to grow,
They sought their mighty strength to show,
And so they made the list.

They bared the blade they bore in hand,
The untriumphant traitors' brand,
And claimed to cleanse their cloven land,
Or so they would insist.
The listed names were left for dead,
And sanguine streets were run with red,
For people's sake were people bled,
Or so proclaimed the list.

"The war is over," soldiers say,
"We get to live another day,
But evil must be kept at bay,
And so we must resist.
With weapons we will purge the field,
Ensure our nation's surest shield,
To evil we will never yield,
And so we write the list."

And so from Rome they worked to rid
All those who from the Sullans hid,
And thousands thanked them as they did,
Their wrongs they soon dismissed.
But when that evil came to die,
And blood upon the ground was dry,
They bled the same as you or I,
The same to serve the list.

But list nor soldier would abate,
And servants more of stake than state,
Would count the names of cleanly rate,
Among the evil's midst.
They robbed them of their legal right,
Turned friends to foes in fatal night,
And Romans read at rising light,
The names upon the list.

But what these people did so wrong,
What led their lives to list belong,
Was be the rivals of the strong,

And strength does not desist.
These noble men's ignoble kin,
Who'd break their bond their wealth to win,
Impugned their innocence in sin,
And put them on the list.

And patriots of peace came out,
And shed their sheltered shreds of doubt,
To not the wrong but righteous rout,
Their leaders to assist.
And Roman turned on Roman soon,
All opposition opportune,
And bodies would in streets be strewn
Before they'd doubt the list.

The leader claimed for honest cause,
The senate by their lofty laws,
The people never giving pause,
The names it ought consist.
But once the rule of law had gone,
And from the blade had blood been drawn,
A reign of ruin lingered on,
The ruin of the list.

So Romans, heed me as I warn
So that you may not have to mourn
The loss of those who draw the scorn
Of leaders you enlist.
Challenge those who have in store,
To wage in peace a civil war,
Or find, as silent men before,
Your name upon the list.

Taunton High School
Teacher: Jessica Ouellette