Pearl Harbor

(The student imagines himself as a sailor on the USS Arizona)

I stood in the kitchen of the USS Arizona. I scrubbed the floor and cleaned the dishes. I walked outside and looked up into the sky. The sun shined brightly; it felt as if it would be a great day. Suddenly I began hearing a strange buzz-like sound: I see everybody on the ship, and nearby, looking around, trying to figure out what is going on. Then I begin hearing loud shouts and screams of terror. I look around and see fighter planes. It’s the Japanese! All of a sudden they begin shooting at the harbor. I see people running around in terror trying to hide, others trying to shoot down the planes.

As everybody scrambles, I see endless clouds of smoke and explosions all around me. They start shooting at everything they see. Suddenly a bomb lands right on the bow. Then another hit, and another. I sprint as fast as I can and the whole bow blows up. My vision fades and all I can see is white smoke and fire. I see the ship begin sinking downward, just as another bomb hits the lower deck. I run towards the edge of the ship and jump off into the cold waters. Along with the others, I try swimming my way to the Californian. I grab onto a ladder and pull myself up. I look around as everything around me is being blown up. Smoke engulfs the whole harbor.

I run around the ship trying to find cover, but then I feel the ship shake. A bomb blows up on the starboard side and the ship starts tilting to an angle. Everyone tries running to the other side of the ship but they keep slipping down to the water. I use my surroundings to get up to the other side. As the ship is about to be completely capsized I make my way to the top of the starboard side. I stand there, dodging bullets, just as the ship is listing on its side. But the Californian doesn’t stop capsizing. It keeps turning. I crawl on the side of the ship trying to keep up with the ship as it capsizes. In a matter of seconds the whole
ship turns upside down. The bottom is sticking out of the water. I see a few others standing on it. Others lay low because of the bombs and gunfire.

I get down low and dodge numerous bullets and bombs. I see the planes slowly stop bombing. After a while I begin seeing fewer planes until there are no more. Suddenly I look up and notice a U.S fighter plane. It rushes over the sinking ships, gunning down the invaders. All out of nowhere more of our fighters come out, shooting at the remainders. In a matter of minutes there are no Japanese planes left. All I see are sinking ships, our fighters, and chaos all around. I stand on the overturned ship and look around me. People run around the beach, their bodies completely burned, bodies lying in the ocean, fire all around me, smoke engulfing the entire harbor, some ships on fire, others sinking.

I look towards the Arizona. It’s just about completely submerged in the water. I hear screams all around me. A few lifeboats come out to pick us up. When we get to land I look back to the water. Some ships are sunken. Others sinking, and others capsized. A few fighter planes lay on the beachhead. The soldiers get us to the hospital. Out of nowhere, there are hundreds of people rushing like a mob coming to a concert. Their bodies are burned with ash, some with fire on them, others missing a limb. Everything has gone to chaos. Looks like this beautiful day just turned into a nightmare.