**A Paperclip**

Ms. Vander Heiden

I am a shiny green paperclip.

I join people and ideas together with flexibility.

Like a paperclip travels from one room to the next or from container to page, I travel to states and countries.
I can be found in school or on the page of a book.

My formation is precise and exact, but I have learned to bend.

Sometimes I take on too much and get bent out of shape. I get close to snapping, but my family and friends help me twist back together.

I’m outwardly shiny and welcoming.

My green color reflects the trees I love.

I was manufactured in Wisconsin.

I’m a new paperclip here in St. Michael, though I’ve been in use for three years.

In this class, I’ll join you to *Beowulf* and to Chaucer and to each other to make lasting, staple-like connections.

**A Hiking Pack**

Ms. Vander Heiden

I am a hiking backpack.

Like a pack is loaded up and taken to new places, I travel the world. I’ve slung my pack on my shoulders for Germany, Spain, Mexico, and most recently, the Great Smoky Mountains, where I traversed 50 miles of ridgeline.

I zip and strap people to new ideas and books.

My family and friends cinch my pack and keep it together.

I have many pockets—some are easy to see through while others require unzipping, and some will remain a mystery.

You can see that I like to greet you, I will call on you, and I will give you feedback on your work.

The unzipped main pocket displays my condensed resume: I graduated from St. Ben’s/St. John’s, I taught in Melrose, MN for three years, and I’ve begun my second year at STMA. In fact, I’m going to need a bigger pack because I just became a student again at St. Thomas.

I’m water resistant, but I do need a rain fly to keep the pelting storm off. I’ll need your help in class, too. After all, I don’t know everything.

With the help of a strong hip strap and a good water bottle pouch for frequent breaks, together we’ll make *Beowulf* and Chaucer easier to carry.