



MHL'S
TEEN 2016
POETRY
CONTEST

Tuesday April 26, 2016

7pm

Memorial Hall Library

Sponsored by the Friends of Memorial Hall Library

Memorial Hall Library’s 12th Annual Teen Poetry Contest Award Winning Poems

Judged by Gayle C. Heney, North Andover’s former 2-term Poet Laureate. She is the producer and host of the TV series *Write Now*. Ms. Heney was editor of the poetry anthology *Songs from the Castle’s Remains*. Her poems have appeared in the book Moments Falling Open, numerous publications and chapbooks. She originated and judged *North Andover High School’s Robert Frost Poetry Awards*. Heney has taught poetry at the Peabody Essex Museum, libraries, senior centers, schools, Essex Art Center, Rolling Ridge Conference Center, Salem Arts Festivals, retirement communities and MA Poetry’s Student Day of Poetry.

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Middle School Top Honors

Middle School First Place: "Peas" by Lauren Jeffery

Mother likes to pretend that everything is okay.
Even though
Me and Leroy
can hear her stomach rumbling
most nights
and hear how often
the dust blows through
like a train.

We pick peas,
Leroy and me and Mother.
Sometimes Violet joins
But mostly she takes care of the baby.

Sometimes Leroy sneaks a pea
while we're picking.
When Mother catches him,
she scolds him.
She says we'll get in trouble
and she makes him spit it out
because she says why
should he have something nice
when he's been bad?
When she doesn't catch him,
he looks so happy
that I can't help but want
to sneak a pea, too.

We don't have a lot
to eat.
Mostly
Mother steals peas
When the fields are empty
and sometimes
Leroy and Violet and I
kill birds.
They shriek at us
asking why.
I remind them that they
have to kill worms to feed their young.
And I ask them why?
And they don't respond.
Mostly because they're usually dead

by then.

A lot of the time,
we get dusty.

We get so dusty
that we look like clods
of soil.

We look like we might
start sprouting grass
and peas of our own.

We don't always get
to wash
but when we do,
the water runs brown.

Always.

Middle School Second Place: "Puppet" by Ariel Kim

A spotlight glares me in the face
As the backdrop drops
along with my stomach
The puppet show has begun

With a tug of their unseen hands
I see myself spin
Leaping in the air
And outsider to my own body

I am a puppet
Subjected to bend to their will
Whenever, whatever they want

A smile
Painted across my face
Words choked from my mouth
I cannot escape from this horror

I am jerked in all directions
Upwards, right or left,
Down on my knees

Doing the things I don't want to do
The people who made me
Stitched me together
Piece by piece
are living out their lives through me
for the sake
of putting on a show.

I am a puppet
strangled by unbreakable strings
Stronger than iron chains
They don't clang against the ground
But they drag me down the same

From the audience,
They are hard to see
For how else will they believe
That I am moving with a will of my own?

Will they ever know
that behind this painted façade
there is a girl
crying inside?

I am a puppet
Sometimes I find myself
Dreaming about the day
That I might break free
And move on my own two feet.

Middle School Third Place: "Ode to Paper" by Sophie Jeffery

Paper
Pure white, black,
and every color in between
A blank space,
full of ideas,
Just waiting to be exposed

Paper
A textural liar
Everyone thinks you're smooth, but

You are many fibers,
bunched together in a sheet

Paper
Perfect, but, not for long
Your beauty is fated
to be marked up
By words, or color

Paper
A stationary's gymnast
You can be folded in any way,
for fun (origami),
or for math (fractions)

Paper
You are tough
You can stand the punch
of a staple, or
The constant pinch
of a clip

Paper
A product of nature
When I wave you,
I hear you whisper,
like a forest wind
Drifting through the trees

Middle School Teen Choice: "A Desk in a Corner Somewhere" by Aleah Davidson

Can a word make a difference?
Can a paragraph open a mind?
Can a story change a life?

J.K Rowling made you believe in magic,
John Green had you sobbing for weeks,
Suzanne Collins taught the power
of sacrificing yourself as tribute
these wonderful worlds are ours

At a desk in a corner somewhere,
sits a woman who lives through a pen.

And experience flows through her veins
that beats her heart and pumps her blood.

Though lonely and dark
as a corner ever was,
though deep wrinkles shadow as silver hair shimmers
her words bring the brightest color,
the liveliest youth
you may hope to uncover
She cries ink onto paper
so they know of her sorrow,
She laughs letters of joy
so they know of her triumph,
and she bleeds stories that can change,
a perspective,
a person,
a world.

Stories that give hope to a struggling family.
Stories that bring light into a darkening household.
Stories that inspire and spark emotion,
that make eyes light up, ablaze

How we feel words in bright bursting hues.
An entire planet,
colors, emotions, life.
The screaming red of a tulip,
the sleeping green of a sprout,
is captured and stored
in ink darker than the blackest raven.

And how
the dancing of the stars,
the enchantment of a forest,
the colors of life, emotion,
is bottled up within the stanzas of a poem.

And how the cry of the world,
the ecstasy of the children,
and the triumph of one person,
can be felt by people all over the earth,
from the pages of a book,

from the stanzas of a poem,
 from the ink, from a pen, from that desk,
 in a corner
 somewhere. 

Middle School Teen Choice: “The Resolute Church” by Edison Chae

Dust falls like the snow sometimes does
 Glinting in the sun
 And coating the ground.

Dust blows in the nave
 Alighting on the pews
 That have not been swept many months.

He peers through the shattered windows
 Splinters of wood from the rough frames
 Jabbing tender palms
 And blood drips
 Staining the ground red.
 He'll come back again
 When others extend their hands
 And resurrect his fallen brother.
 The dust accumulates.
 Small shoots strain for the sun
 As it sears the wooden tiles
 Nailed haphazardly to the roof.
 The sun pressing its fiery palms
 Upon the earth.
 Grabbing.
 Grasping.
 Greedy.
 Hoarding away more land
 From his brethren, the rain.

They come one day
 One day
 Through the searing sun
 Murmuring softly.
 Ragged clothing.
 They sweep the dust off the pews
 And out the door.
 A bundle of wildflowers placed on the lectern.
 Candles lit.

He looks again,
Mends the broken glass
And shuts the dust out.

Middle School Honorable Mentions

“The Beauty of Haiku”: A collection of my haiku by Saadwi Balaji

Birth and Death

A patch of sunlight
Flowers bloom, petals unfurl
Hackberry's leaves fall

Supernatural

Ink spreads across sheets
And the author turns around...
Cold air chills his spine

Shades of Winter

Leaves crunch as I trudge
And the wind whizzes past me
Winter's shades sweep in

A Walk in the Beach

Scorching ball of fire
Seashells forge their epitaph
Sand's damp; washed by waves

Her Grave

Flowers at her grave
Tears trickle down my grim face
Mist around her grave

Change

Ever changing leaves
And inconspicuously
Hues dance in the wind

Transformation

Caterpillar chomps
Then wears a chrysalis coat
Colourful wings spread

“Future” by Addison Baldwin

Fast.
It’s moving way too fast.
The anxiety, the pressure.
Soon i’ll be graduating high school
And thinking about
what college i’m going to.
I’ll be buying my own car
And maybe even a house.
When my grandparents
Used to tell me to have fun as a kid,
I didn’t really believe them.
I kind of just blew them off.
But now that the future creeps
Closer and closer,
I wanna make sure I do what makes
ME
Happy.
I wanna make mistakes and have fun.
I wanna take chances and make people proud.
I wanna admire what I have
And believe what I believe.
I gonna fight with the people that deserve it
And love the people that deserve it.
Because if I don’t do that,
years from now,
When I’m sitting at the kitchen table
With a cup of coffee and a newspaper in my hands,

I’ll be regretting the things I didn’t do.

“Just Breathe” by Addison Baldwin

My heart starts to beat
faster and faster.

My lips begin to tremble and
my face becomes a bright crimson.
I start to shake my leg,
nonstop.
The nerves are taking over.
My sweaty hands grasp the mic,
I level it with my mouth.
I stare out in the audience.
Making eye contact with
all the blank faces,
waiting for what's to come.
I smooth my lace dress,
each one of my nails getting caught
on the soft fabric.
The pianist starts to play,
spreading her hands across each
black and white key.
Each note, each melody,
echos through the room,
I am calm with familiarity.
"Just breathe" leaves my mouth.
I lock eyes with my grandmother,
she nods her head.
I shut my eyelids,
adjust my hands on the mic,
take a deep breath,
and sing.

"The journey" by Sara Beth Boese

Your journey may be
as difficult as breaking iron
or it may be
as easy as ripping paper.
While you are getting ready
for your journey,
make sure
you don't forget,
the simple things
that you were taught
to always remember.

Check both ways
before you cross the street.

Don't talk to strangers.
 Walk on the right side of the road.
 Hold doors open.
 Say please and thank-you.
 And always remember
 to keep your shoes tied tight.

Your shoes will do the walking,
 you just follow the path.
 Feel the road beneath your feet.
 Feel the wind against your face.
 On your journey,
 never forget the important things
 that you were taught
 when you were young.

Mind your manners.
 Keep your hands to yourself.
 Raise your hand if you have a question.
 Use an indoor voice.
 Wash your hands
 before you eat and after you go to the bathroom.
 And always remember
 to keep your shoes tied tight.

“The Memory Tree” by Eugen Botnaru

I am here,
 At memory lane
 Wide as a wall
 Intertwining
 Like my ancestors
 It's roots cling to the rocks
 The river gurgling beneath it
 The hills stretch as far as the eye can see
 Each full moon the tree grows like a child
 The gnarled roots twice as thick as a man's arm
 It lives
 It remembers
 It knows
 My great-grandmother was an aristocrat
 Buried somewhere near
 Her memories flow through me like currents through an ocean
 I see her being crowned

I see her ruling
 I see her on her deathbed
 Then I see my mother
 A simple woman, buried far away
 Only seeing the tree once
 I see her being born
 I see her teaching children
 I see her caring for me
 It is all through the memory tree
 It lives
 It remembers
 It knows

Who will be next



“Ode to Chocolate Chip Cookies” by Sam Brosnan

Chocolate chip cookies,
 straight from the oven
 warm
 gooey
 inside
 chocolate chips
 still melting,
 like ice cubes
 on a hot day.

Aroma,

fills up the whole house
as they bake,
drawing a crowd
just to watch
as the cookies turn
a perfect
golden brown.

Bliss:
transporting you,
to your favorite place,
as soon as it touches
the lips.

Hearing the oven ring,
even better than
the last bell
before summer vacation.
Rushing
to get the best one
before someone else can.

Getting molten chocolate
all over your hands
like sap
after you climb a tree.

Just the right amount
of chocolate to cookie.

Perfect.

“Ode to Sleep” by Katherine Fillion

A loud alarm
cuts
through
the serenity like
a blade.
I hit snooze,
10 more minutes.
I hit it again,
10 more.
Finally I roll out of bed,

eyelids as heavy
 as boulders,
 and walk
 down the hall
 as if I am a zombie.
 My bed begging me to return.
 I do.

Sinking under the
 soft covers,
 head resting on
 a silk pillowcase,
 blankets white as snow.
 The warmth of a campfire,
 found in fabric.

Eyes cloud over
 once again,
 I fall back into
 a soothing silent world,
 heaven on earth,
 sleep.

“Never Saw Santa” by Cassia Gonsalves

I have always wanted to see Santa Clause,
 More than going to Narnia or the Land of Oz.
 He always comes because I try to be a good kid,
 But usually I fall asleep, so this year this is what I did:

I gulped down 15 cans of soda and forty-one cups of coffee.
 I munched on 8 pounds of chocolate, so I would be hyper and lively.
 I set up a video camera under the tree in the living room.
 I put on headphones and let some music boom.

I sat on the floor and not in bed,
 So I wouldn't get cozy or rest my eyes or head.
 Hours ticked by and I got as bored as a couch bum,
 Maybe I had been bad and he isn't going to come.

Finally, finally, I heard bells jingling on the roof
 And the clippity-clop of reindeer hooves.
 I felt like a dog about to get a treat after winning a prize,
 I was awestruck and nervous and filled with surprise.

I couldn't move a muscle or even flinch,
 I couldn't speak or move an inch.
 I was so amazed that he was here,
 that I fainted and he just disappeared.

I set up the video camera, but never turned it on.
 Dumb me, I fell asleep for a second, then he was gone.
 Maybe next year, I'll pretend to be an elf or think of a better plan,
 But I know that it's almost impossible to see that jolly man.

“Broken” by Yashvi Gosalia

In India, a weary woman works.
 People see the torn and tattered rags I call clothes.
 People see my blackened feet from walking on the sizzling pavement, day after day.
 People see my thinning hair coming out of its frizzed bun.
 What they don't know is that I've bruises on the places they can't see,
 In my heart and on my thighs.
 What they don't know is that my children, whom I've raised from birth,
 Throw me away like a used tissue, and only come to see me when they need money.
 What they don't know is that I've been trying to survive with the help of only
 Myself.

In Boston, a girl wishes.
 People see the piles of praise heaped on me by teachers, parents, and students alike.
 People see my outstanding grades, which they can never surpass.
 People see my mask and think, “Wow, she's very intelligent.” “She's such a know-it-all.”
 What they don't know is that at home, I can't seem to do anything right, in my parent's eyes.
 What they don't know is that my dreams, hopes, and wishes have been cast aside,
 In favor of what my parents want for me.
 What they don't know is that I've been fighting my own blood for my whole life
 And all I want to do is to forget everything, and just
 Stop.

In Los Angeles, a lady is hurting.
 People see my long, tanned legs and perfectly styled hair.
 People see my my branded clothes and long, lean body.
 People see my wealth and beauty, and are jealous.
 What they don't know is that I've never had a good memory with either my parents,
 And so my father tries to make it up to me with money.
 What they don't know is that each and every food I eat is counted and logged...and thrown up.
 What they don't know is that I'm jealous of them for having
 A loving family,

And being able to enjoy food,
And having confidence in who they are.

My problems may be different from yours.
Your problems may be bigger than mine.
But know that there is always someone to help you,
Guide you,
Be your light.
Be thankful for the little things in life.
You are alive and breathing.
You have a chance to make this day count and think bigger than yourself.
But realize that it's okay to focus on you.

And if you ever need
A helping hand,
A listening pair of ears,
A strong shoulder to cry on,

Know that I am here for you.

“A Lie” By Yashvi Gosalia

Every word that comes out of my mouth is a lie.
I try to hide them with reassurances and smiles.
You'll never know that what I'm saying to you
Could never be further from being true.

“What's up? Hey, how was your day?”
I'll smile at you, “It was fine,” I'll say.
As I move to my room, I'll wish I could be bold,
And let the story of what really happened be told.

The beginning of the year, they chose to target me.
A raging bull disregarding my pleas.
They dug their dirty paws into my story and life,
Taking pleasure in the fact that each slur was a knife.

They've started using social media now,
Stripping even more of my self confidence, somehow.
Apparently, I'm not good enough for anyone.
And as for friends? I have none.

No one is willing or wants to defend
me, when hurling insults is the new trend.
And so the lies and rumors and abuse keep going,

But for some stupid reason, I keep hoping.

I keep hoping that someday, this will cease.
But in my heart of hearts, I know that there's no peace.

And so every word that comes out is a lie,
Yet I will hide them with reassurances and smiles.
But you'll never know that what I say to you,
Could never be further from being true.

“The Closed Door” by Kirk Hillson

The news hit me,
like a slamming door,
in my face.

For Sale,
on the lawn,
moving,
to Andover.

“I don't want to move!”

Our house is special
it smells like cookies,
the memories are lost,
my room,
gone,
I don't want to lose that

The new house,
it was empty,
new,
not home.

My new house is small,
it doesn't feel right,
not home.

Let me out,
I'm trapped,
in the taunting house,
I feel so alone.

I want to move back,
 to familiar faces,
 to my red and blue walls,
 to my quiet road,
 to my special home,
 to my forgiving house,
 to my big yard,
 to my kitchen full of memories,
 now I'm just my parent's nightmare.

I feel sad,
 I feel homesick,
 I feel angry,
 I feel depressed,
 I feel scared.

I'm searching for,
 an open door,
 they all seem closed.

“Autumn” by Emma Keany

Leaves descend from their branches,
 stripping the trees bare.
 Some pirouetting,
 graceful dancers on their way
 to a new life
 Some tumbling,
 timid and frightened,
 fearing what this new “life”
 shall bring.
 A flurry of reds
 and oranges
 and yellows
 is swept up by the breeze.
 When the wind becomes
 a bit more forgiving,
 and a bit gentler,
 the leaves cascade around you,
 forming a tornado of colors.
 Cold nips at noses
 and turns them a rosey color.
 The chill of winter

teases all those who brave the outdoors,
 forcing a heavy coat
 or allowing a light sweater
 depending on its mood.
 Rainbow piles can be seen on all lawns,
 but are almost immediately destroyed
 by playful children.
 Giggles fill the air
 as young offspring bound toward the mountains
 of bladelike plant pieces.
 There are whoops of excitement
 as more and more
 leap into the mounds.
 And as the sun goes down earlier
 and the nights become longer,
 a new season approaches
 that will fill the air with biting cold
 and cover the ground in white mush.
 But for now,
 we forget the inevitability
 of the next part of the year,
 and we decide to savor
 the refreshing chill in the air
 and the lack of insect infestations
 and the rainbow leaves that appear
 all around us.
 We push winter
 to the back of our minds
 and thank the universe,
 thank the Earth's fortunate positioning,

 for autumn.

“7 ways of looking at social media” by Johanna Kerrigan

I.

Among millions of people
 Posting, sharing, liking, commenting
 I sit and watch the chaos

II.

It may be dinner time
 It may be a birthday party

It may be school
But notifications are always going off

III.

There was an eruption
Was the trend even new?
Who cares?
Knockoffs are already being made.

IV.

Instagram and Tumblr
Are two
Instagram and Tumblr and a teenage girl
Are one

V.

I like what I see,
as I scroll through.
But I could never be like them.
But I try.

VI.

The girl angles her hand,
for the perfect shot.
Desperate for likes.

VII.

The tortured girl sits alone.
tears staining her cheeks
As people post
and pick
and pester

her latest picture.

“My Queen, My Enemy” by Hannah Kim

I used to have a friend who would,
Whisper in my ear,
And point fingers at the things,
I loved to do.
I would give in,
And would forget,

the lonely homework,
Lying on my desk.

I used to have a friend who would,
Whisper in my ear,
“You can do it later.”
“It’s not due tomorrow.”
“Can’t we just play one more hour?”

I tried to break free,
Of our friendship.
But she would always find a way,
To drag me back into the bottomless pit,
Of late work, sleepless nights,
And last minute frenzies.

I would get mad at her,
For making me suffer.
I vowed to never listen to her again.
But she would always,
Knock on the door,
And I found myself,
Opening the door.

I used to think that she was my friend,
But I realized in our relationship,
She was the empress,
And I was like a mere slave,
Forced to follow,
Under her rule.
All hail the empress procrastination,
Our queen,

My lord.

“In Memory Of” by Christina Li

After moons of hard work to no avail:
He was the one.
I knew it.

Those eyes
I gaze into the inky depths of them
Quickly getting lost in the swirling abyss of secrets they hold

That someday, I would hope to possess.

Those eyes
 Their ineffable beauty
 The way the light glints off them
 Is the nonpareil of everything to be

Those eyes
 The handiwork of the shading
 The smooth gradient of black to white
 Picasso would not even cavil

The fire
 Full of untapped energy
 Of passion in everything he would do
 Of determination, willing to cross the uncrossable

The fire
 Yet warm and welcoming
 One that you would curl up besides
 Drinking hot cocoa on a cold winter night

The scales
 From their precise outlining
 To their exquisite patina
 Could even make the Rainbow Fish envious

After that final stroke
 I knew that we would travel places
 From a local exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts
 To a permanent gallery at the Louvre

We would gain laudatory reviews
 Make rapt, inspirational speeches
 Be doted upon by loving admirers
 Inspire the next generation of fangirls

But alas, even the best have their demise
 For doodling on a lined piece of paper
 Is subject to being recycled by an unsuspecting teacher
 Throwing away an aspiring artist's hopes and dreams with it.

Bob XVII: the Platonic Ideal of all fire-breathing fish ever to be doodled in math class
 He rests in pieces
 Destined to be reborn into cardstock

In memory of Bob, I write this poem.

“Under the Willows” by Serena Li

The sun wakes me up
 today is her birthday
 I pack her favorite foods into a basket
 not forgetting the flowers
 Grab my guitar
 and head out

She is in her usual spot
 under the willows
 Just as calm and
 beautiful
 as when I first met her

I smile
 make my way across the park
 Say happy birthday
 darling
 and sit down next to
 her

grave

“I am” by Solace Lockheart

Snowflakes do not need the wind
 to blow them into the heights of the trees
 they flutter gracefully
 and nestle on the ground
 for they have seen the treetops
 A fire does not need the wind
 to reach the heights of the trees
 It climbs through the sky
 blazing, bright, blinding
 sprawling through the land
 it laughs at its own majesty
 And yet the wind stays
 In the midst of chaos
 Or a tranquil winter's eve

It whistles a tune
 and dances with falling leaves
 Am I the snow
 Or am I the fire
 Perhaps....

I am the wind

“Leaning” by Anna Riley
 Based on the painting Man Leaning on a Parapet by Georges Seurat

He leans,
 a ghostly shadow,
 the light of the city
 shining down on him
 like a thousand nebulas.
 The tree,
 his guardian
 from the weight of the world.

He dreams as he leans,
 he dreams
 and wonders
 what would life be
 if things were different.
 If he didn't
 go to work everyday
 and hear the click of the typewriters
 and the squeak of floorboards
 beneath sullen feet.

If he had done something
 fantastical
 and preposterous.
 If he had jumped
 and flown
 and soared.

What if he had been a pilot
 and traveled the world?
 He could have been a lion wrangler,
 taming the wild beasts.
 Where was the magnificence and
 glory?

There is no glory
in cubicles and desk chairs.

He could have been a million things,
a teacher, a painter, a poet,
a pilot or a lion wrangler.

But instead, he leans.
He contemplates

what could have been.



“Remembrance” by Haywood Schwartz

As I gaze out into the turquoise sea
from my room on board
and I notice a boat sailing away
I am filled with dread

I didn't want to go
why couldn't I stay
My friends
family

They're all gone

I remember my dad playing fetch and
I Hear my mom's soothing reassuring voice

I'm
all
alone

Bawling on the floor
I hollered "I can't remember anything"
I woke up here
To the seagulls cawing overhead
all I remember is a small strand of love
from my friends and family

I don't know what they look like
but I know when I see them
I'll know who they are.

Someone came to my room a while ago
To give me food
And water
He doesn't look much
I bet I could take him
If it came to it
He cleans me up with an antiseptic
And leaves

Once the taste of sorghum and moonshine is out of my mouth
I think

I don't know what will happen next,
all I know is that
I need to go on
To see
My family
Again.

“A Work in Progress” by Samar Seth

Me (Samar)

I have some
work to do.
It's not due tomorrow
but,

I should try
To finish it early.

How much time
do I have?
Oh,
only three days.

I have to stop
getting distracted

or I won't finish
in time.

I feel bad
that Aarav

isn't learning

to work hard.

My Brother (Aarav)

I have some
work to do.

But
it's not due
tomorrow,

so I'll do it later.
How much time
do I have?
Oh,

a whole three days!

I don't have
to worry.

I have plenty
of time.

I feel bad

That Samar

has to constantly
work hard.
He hasn't had time
to play with me
in years.

“Silence Silenced” by Katherine Song

I reach the chair
 And immediately spontaneously combust
 (internally.)
 Hordes of honeybees swarm into my stomach.
 Quaking, I sit down and adjust my endpin.

The sound of a normally melodious “A”
 suddenly seems foreign.
 When I touch the fingerboard, my hands begin to sweat
 making the strings
 far more slippery than they were.

The hall is spinning
 the audience looms over me.
 I let out a stuttering breath.
 I inhale shakily
 somehow, my short piece is now
 thrice as daunting
 a mistake
 so much more shameful.

I exhale deliberately.
 My heart is pounding.
 My face is heating.
 Hesitating slightly, I gracefully lift my bow.

As I bring it down,
 my left hand begins to flit delicately across the ebony fingerboard.
 Amidst a shimmering cloud of rosin
 slivers of sound slice the silence around me.

“The Bridge Across” by Emerald Tan

I wander,
 I lose myself on
 a dirt road,
 ashes and charcoal on both sides,
 the musky aroma swarming around
 me and in my nose.

Lost in my mind,
 dirt against the

soles of my feet.
 I walk
 and walk
 and forget.
 The sulking clouds are
 memories that
 make me.

Deep in a trance,
 deep in thought,
 I carry nothing but the
 clothes on my back,
 constant pounding of
 my feet
 against hard ground.
 All alone, and I am the
 elephant in the room.

The path from my
 old life to new,
 the bridge that
 crosses this gap.
 I hope to return, one day,
 when I am changed, away
 from deep, dull, darkness.

“Kimball’s Farm Disaster” by Eryn Trant

A sunny afternoon at Kimball’s Farm
 In the second grade, the age of seven
 A perfect day of fun, smiles and no harm
 You would have thought that I was in heaven

How about a ride on the bumper boat?
 Good idea little brother, let’s go
 I don’t know he said, should we take a vote?
 Oh no I said, learn to go with the flow

Boat out of control, would not stop spinning
 Please stop I yelled, and tried to find the brake
 I was so scared and no longer grinning
 Now my foot was stuck, oh what a mistake!

My foot near the engine was being burned
Quickly I learned, my best day had just turned

“Alone in the Fog” by Ciaran Walsh

The wind whistles
past my ears,
dodging trees and
soaring over open fields.
The vibrant colors
erupt from the leaves
in a dazzling display,
creating a flurry of color
everywhere
I look.

The thick fog ahead
masks the path,
like the future,
completely unpredictable.
I hear
the soft crunch
of the leaves
underfoot as I stroll
along the path.
The enormous trees
tower over me
like giants, protected
by their bark armor.

Not a living thing stirs
around me.
Nature is my
only companion,
and the soothing wind
whispers stories in my ears.
The silence is calming,
and I am completely
at peace.

“I Am” by Yuping Zhu

I am in my own world and obedient.
 I wonder why books are burnt.
 I hear Clarisse explaining the world and its peculiarities like ads stretched out to be 200 feet long because cars are so fast.
 I see the man in the moon as bright as a flashlight shining in a dark night.
 I want to burn books like watching delicate birds fluttering in the fiery colors of the evening sky.
 I am in my own world and obedient.
 I pretend to love Mildred yet she feels distant.
 I feel Clarisse’s voice making me think about why I am a fireman.
 I touch Faber’s green earbud like a small shell from the ocean.
 I worry about Clarisse’s death as abrupt as a car screeching to a halt, not aware of the person in front of it.
 I cry about making a woman burn herself because of destroying her prized possessions.
 I am in my own world and obedient.
 I understand that everybody leaves a remnant of them behind when they die like Granger’s grandfather’s carvings, singing melodious tunes of beautiful hymns.
 I say that I am
 Ecclesiastes.
 I dream about killing Beatty like a resilient soldier from the American Revolution.
 I try to believe in books
 -- they become part of people like Granger.
 I hope that Mildred escaped safely from the phenomenon.
 I am in my own world and obedient
 .
 I am Guy Montag

High School Top Honors

First Place High School: “Don’t You Ever Want Kids?” by Skylar Rungren, Andover High School

In the burdens that I carry bound to my chest
 as if they were precious treasures,
 In the ways I used to bleed,
 in the nights spent trying to cover up my unfortunate biology

It’s almost as if I killed the only thing that mattered about me,
 when women are so valued for their ability to be mothers-
 and I see her- or rather, the lost potential to be her

I see her in the width of my hips and the gaps between my thighs,
all the things I tried to hide under bruises and gold glitter nail polish.

It's as if she's another person living inside of me already,
the starved and broken being that I see in the mirror
and look back at, hopelessly.

I was asked to make a decision about fertility at sixteen,
when I don't know what fertility means,
but I see women crying in exam rooms-

In the discomfort of my past I see her, terrified,
backed into a corner as she's asked to kill herself,
and I'm staring at her reflection in an empty plate-
sometimes I wish I didn't feel this way.

My mother told me of her miscarriage
and I wondered how she felt
about having another son
or about the way it felt
like I killed the only daughter she had left.

and I was told by doctors "she will be useless",
"you won't need her if you do this"
"You're a kid"
"You don't know what you'll want in the future".

Some days I feel her like a lost child,
calling out to me to keep her,
to find her in the dark hallways of my lost desires.

the loathing I feel for her is so tinged with love,
but if asked I would get rid of her.

I would bury her in surgical procedures,
latex gloves and metal clamps and a space,
where she used to be.

she and I used to live symbiotically
but with puberty she and I became hostile sisters
and then brothers,

and I accepted that I will never be a mother

Second Place High School: "College Students' Lullaby" by Charlotte Guterman, Andover High School

It's much quieter than you thought it would be
 And there are no lullabies just the tumble of
 lonely washing machines
 No soft blankets
 You're cradled in brick corners
 Even the moon seems
 to Shine colder now
 And metal bunk beds that squeak and clatter
 Fill up the emptiness
 Until it
 spills over your edges
 Dust collects
 And you still don't know how to vacuum
 Or change a tire
 Or
 patch a rip
 So instead of sewing up your splitting seams
 You try to fill the holes
 With people
 With clothes pins and super glue,
 With late night take out and music and laughter and freedom
 But you cannot fix everything,
 Or know everything,
 Even the things you think you Ought
 to know by now
 So fall asleep slowly
 Under an indifferent moon
 Laugh loud that the sound echoes
 across your emptiness
 Teach your heart to keep time
 With the lonely washing machines
 Close
 your eyes,
 Your mouth,
 Your textbook,
 Breathe
 Hold yourself apart
 Until you learn
 With clothes
 pins and super glue
 To pull yourself back together

Third Place High School: "THERE IS A CYCLE AND WE NAME IT WHAT WE WANT" by Julia Beckwith, Phillips Academy

one.

in chemistry, we learn about acids and bases;
 how these molecules react with each other;
 one accepting what the other loses.
 i thought that acids and bases were complete opposites, that they couldn't coexist,
 but in reality, their destinies are dependent and there's something about the ease
 of it all,
 how there's no question of what will happen:
 the acid loses a proton; the base accepts it:
 what is lost is found.

two.

in two years, i will be nineteen:
 the same age my mother was when she lost her mother.

three.

when my mother came to this country she did not speak English
 once, i asked her why she didn't teach my brothers and i Korean and she
 explained how her accent haunted her as a child.
 she wanted better for us; she wanted our tongues untainted.
 she still does not use articles correctly and when i can't bear the truth of her words
 i turn to her grammar and tear it apart, interjecting with "the"s and "a"s and
 knowing exactly
 how it will hurt her.

four.

when my best friend was younger she believed that luck came in the form of pennies;
 each morning, she would throw a penny into the world of her bedroom and search for it because she believed the universe would be a little softer towards her if she found it.
 one day, she couldn't find her penny and now,
 if she finds one on the sidewalk she does not pick it up

five.

one night, i stepped into the orange light of my parents' bedroom while my mother was brushing her teeth and i gave her a hug.
 she was shocked but she was trying not to show it and as i returned to myself, i understood that she should not have been surprised

six.

dandelions are made of wished-upon eyelashes. raindrops yearn to leave the clouds, only to return to the sky. all reactions will reach equilibrium. the words that i do not type are just as relevant as the ones i do. the ocean is merely trying to prove itself. everything impossible becomes green. i do not care how many times i say the same thing if it is true. what is lost is found.

seven.

when i cut my hair, everyone said i looked like my mother.
 so much of her is within me; yet
 she tells me i am not Korean; that i have no right to identify as such.
 now she is growing out her hair and
 i wonder if people will tell her that she looks like me
 eight.
 my middle name is soh-ra; in Korean, it means "lovely joy"
 sometimes i think my mother regrets naming me something so pure

nine.

did you know that it is possible for ions to act as both an acid and a base? there's even a word for it. amphoteric. for example, water is amphoteric because it can give up a hydrogen or accept one. so it's not an acid, or a base, but something More.

ten.

this summer, my family is going to korea.
 it will be the first time my mother has been since 1974
 she will cry, probably.
 it will be the first time she cries in front of me
 while i am not the reason

eleven.

my mother was born on the eleventh day of the eleventh month
 eleven/eleven – i tell her to make a wish.

twelve.

what is lost is found.

High School Teen Choice: “How to Deal with Unrequited Feelings” by Natalie Good,
 Cambridge School of Weston

I walk along the riverbank to find a friend.

She sits under a low hanging tree,
 sheltered by fruit she's too weak to pick.
 Her body sleeps--limp arms, slumped spine--
 but her eyes are burning at the edges,
 like the wavering of the horizon on too-hot days,
 the edge of the earth slipping away into a wobbly mirage.

"Clytia?" I say.

She blinks, eyes watering--
 only partly from staring directly into the sun.

"Yeah?" she says.

"I'm looking for your advice," I say.

She nods, slow, and I sit down next to her.

"So, there's this girl. And I was wondering: what do I do if she doesn't like me back?"

Clytia huffs a sigh, leaning back on her elbows.

“When Apollo rejected me, I sat down right here and cried. So pick a spot.”

I pat the ground next to me. “Check.”

“Now, for the next nine days, eat and drink nothing but your own tears.”

She points to her spindly legs, submerged in dirt.

“Root your legs in the ground and--well,

I look at the sun,” she says.

“For Apollo?” I ask.

She nods. “I look up and hope I’ll see him driving that chariot,

With the sky bright and brilliant,

Streaming from the nape of his neck to

the clouds, huffing their Good Morning.

So, look at something that reminds you of her.”

“And then what?” I say.

She breathes in,

sucking the sky into her rib cage,

absorbing the golden air that drifts from Apollo's horses,
 expanding her chest like a balloon.
 She deflates, eyes falling back to earth.
 "Then you wait to become something else," she finishes.

A moment of quiet.
 I glance at her feet, withering into the soil.

"I want to become a sunflower," she says, voice as hushed as dawn, about to burst.
 "When I feel my bones settle and root into the dirt,
 when I pocket my arms against me like fins,
 when I brush my face against the warm air,
 sprouting and growing into a new form,"
 her neck spurs from staring at her feet to looking at the blaze burning hot above her.
 "I'll reach for the sun."

There is a long pause between us.
 Her elbow is fragile against the plumpness of my own, breakable.
 It's as though I'm cradling a newborn bird.

"How long have you been sitting here?" I ask her.
 My voice is quiet; I'm afraid of turning her lips to stone.
 "Seven days."
 "That doesn't seem," I stop, looking for a gentle word. "Healthy."
 Clytia doesn't say anything, only clenches her jaw.
 I see that something has closed in her, and my time is up.
 "Goodbye," I say, the end of my sentence dangling in the air.

She says nothing.

The sun rises the next day,
 and I feel the blossoming warmth on my face.
 "Clytia?" I say when I reach her place in the dirt. "I found another method for unrequited feelings." She turns her face towards me, eyes red-rimmed and glassy.

"Really, really bad Lifetime movies," I say.
 Her stony face breaks, at least a little.
 She smiles like she's learning how to ride a bike:
 wobbly and uncertain, scared and unsure.
 She takes my hand to stand and I guide her to my house.

She slumps instantly into my couch.
 "Now," I say. "What do you want to watch first: *My Boyfriend's a Centaur* or *Oops, I Married My Mother?*"
 "I think I'll just go to bed," she says.
 I nod. I should have thought of that; she hasn't slept in seven days, after all.

Or eaten, come to think of it.
 “Food?” I say. She nods gently.

Later, I shake her arm.
 Her eyes open slowly
 and I press a bowl into her hands.

Slow bites shift into the sound of her fork scraping the bottom of the bowl,
 scooping up the last fragments of pasta and savoring the golden warmth.
 When she’s finished excavating the treasure, she looks to me.

Egg noodles, the kind I ate on visits to my Yia Yia.
 Pure comfort plucked from my happiest memories.
 Soft, light noodles drizzled with glowing butter:

The best gift I can offer.

High School Teen Choice: “Orange Peel Smiles” Hayden Rungren, Andover High School

These dents are not unlike us, they curve and fall down
 into the flecks of the white and brown stained mirror
 I felt like a small flower, ready to wilt but reaching for the sun
 you felt cold despite the webbed tendrils that enveloped you
 my first layer peeled away, I guess you saw me as a gift
 when I see you, I see ridges and bumps that give you character
 we were the seeds, but we grew into trees with fruit so unique
 that it became an acquired taste, it was more like an experience
 our past is the pith, our future is the juice dripping from your fingers
 our present is the fruit, it can’t last forever
 our stems are woven and they cling to each other (I don’t want to let go)
 your hands stick to the walls of my chest, my heart is pumping citrus not blood
 your cold touch always reminded me of home, we could only see each other when our eyes were
 closed
 you told me I reminded you of half-time during the soccer games you used to play
 you said I was the determination, and the tension, the excitement that comes from the first half of
 a game
 I was the relief and hunger when you saw the orange slices being passed around
 I told you that you were the smell of citrus, the sweet juice running down your hands
 so let’s throw the rinds away and let the citrus course through our veins
 your blood is my blood (I said I didn’t want to let go)

High School Honorable Mentions

“The Abandoned Earth” by Tony Aracena

Our trees, they are dying, our sun will kill us all
 We spoke of a cure, but yet still we fall
 Imagine all the creatures, all the humans on this Earth
 Some are dying quickly and others giving birth

We don't need a leader, we just need a hand
 To heal all the injuries, to heal our broken land
 We talk like politicians, but do nothing at all
 If we could just come together and break the racism wall

Just look around the world, there are those with less than us
 Being ignorant and selfish is crazy, not a plus
 If you were trapped in there shoes, how do you think you'd feel
 Watching everyone ignore you instead of helping you heal

Lest we forget the animals, some have no place to go
 We forget that we rule, so humans ought to know
 We forget the basics, why God created Earth
 He gave us paradise, we destroyed its worth

It's our job to fix this, it's all our mistakes
 Incompetent or competent, lives are at stake
 One by one, that's all it will take
 Before time runs out and this planet breaks

“Where Silence Speaks Louder Than Words,” by Sara Cannella, Greater Lawrence Technical School

I came from a town where haughtiness was no stranger,
 And looks of disdain were often out of anger.
 Where money was a substitute for apologies or prayer,
 And people claiming culpability was far beyond rare.
 Where boys could be insolent to all of the women
 And they had to keep all of those emotions, within them.
 Where the color of your skin determined the respect you received,
 And the quality of your character relied on the popularity you achieved.
 Where bleak smiles are used as currency,
 And gossip is encouraged.

Where the whiteness of your smile dictates your worth,
 And the only thing people notice is your downfalls or dearth.

Where making honor roll was as respectable as the money you had.
 And your circle of friendship reliant on every trend or fad.
 Where I come from,
 And the morals I was raised within.

Where the popularity you earned was as good as gold,
 And not all opinions had the same hold.
 Where I met the most wonderful friend I've ever had,
 And she held my hand through all of things bad.
 Where her and I were innocent sixth grade girls.
 And the word no did not mean anything significant.

Where I sat in the park after school.
 And watched countless people come to indulge in bad habits.
 Where many of my friends fell victim to addiction,
 And the people they used to be, gone.
 Where to reckless behavior so many of my friends were drawn.
 Where I live now, where I'll always be from,
 And where words were as strong as loaded guns.

“I Open My Arms” by Natalie Good, Cambridge School of Weston

I open my arms to you
 Scissor bangs and clean face
 Worn hands and sleepy eyes
 Stay here for a year by my side

I am old and I have seen many things
 Glassy eyes falling across sunset and snow
 I have seen tennis shoes and bruised knees
 I have seen kindergarten debuts
 And pancake mornings

I am old and I have felt many things
 My limbs torn
 holes in my eyes filled with cement
 My head brims with flies and memories of footprints I used to recognize
 Marker scrawlings across my face
 Tattoos of those who have left

I am old and I have known many things
 Old blue eyes clutching white-knuckled onto empty lungs
 Little hands plodding on an apple juice carpet
 Shaggy hair saying goodbye in a bristled embrace

I open my arms to you
 My musty rooms and empty beds
 Foggy glasses and empty chairs
 Stay here for a year by my side

“Ode to Ice Cream” by Natalie Good, Cambridge School of Weston

You are too precious to hold in our bare hands;
 oozing through our fingers
 like flowers peeping through parting pavement.

The only way to fathom you,
 the only way to compass your plump shores,
 are curled cubicles
 primmed into a pulpit.
 Cradling you in our hand,
 tendrils of sugar
 falling like
 raindrops racing to the bottom of windows.

You were taken from the clouds,
 sprinkles of stars sticking in our molars when we take a bite.
 We cradle the chill,
 the rushing cold,
 pocketed in our cheeks.

Delicate, decadent
 You are the origin of commodity;
 what better sign for the dynasty
 than this luxury?
 For only those who
 have the right to temporary things.

Beaded sweat
 sticking to the
 scarred skin of slaves,
 mountaineers,
 ice men.
 Climbing the jagged heights,
 hulking glaciers for the emperor,
 fetching snow for the king’s dessert

Ninety-four pairs of sore feet
 are prized higher than advisors.

Suitors are made of states,
 rushing to claim you as their own invention,
 as if you sprouted,
 fully-formed,
 from their brains.

You are a short-term investment that Nero serves in a jangling chariot,
 trinkets of music scooped up by young ears,
 a heart palpitation.

You are rude,
 dripping,
 slipping through our fingertips,
 soaking our best shirts.
 You refuse to mold against manners,
 forcing us to eat like children,
 shaping us from your sugar.

We search for post-dinner vacancies,
 eyes flitting to the dessert menu.
 We carve space for you,
 expanding our bellies.

Swallowing,
 breathing heavy,
 rolling back home.
 Plump,
 slumped against the car window.

You are too precious to forget.

“Tradition” by Charlotte Guterman, Andover High School

I have heard that in China they used to bind the feet of young girls break the arches, toes, fold in their soles until none of their pain could escape Until their feet fit in shoes that fit in their palms until their hands felt too big for their bodies. And through the generations child followed mother followed grandmother as their footprints shrunk and disappeared. I have heard that in Europe they used to bind the chests of young women break ribs, fold in stomachs until their waists fit perfectly in a man's hands. until perfect was too strong of a word, until they could not take deep enough breaths to speak. So through the generations child followed mother followed grandmother as their voices quieted into silence. And I have heard that in 21st century America they still use the same methods: the feet of young girls are stuffed into high heels, we cannot run. we are told to tuck in our stomachs, we know otherwise will never fit between a man's hands. we are told that that is all we should want. until our sense of self-worth can fit in shoes that fit in our

palms until we are gasping for air, suffocating in the world where perfect is too strong of a word. And through the generations child followed mother followed grandmother as history repeated. And still you say we are pampered- Look at our feet sir, we cannot walk And still you say we are shallow- No sir, that is our breathe, This is not a matter of beauty This is never a matter of beauty This is matter of wanting to matter Of wanting to leave our own footprints, have our own voices, of wanting to lead future generations into a world that accepts us.

“Untitled” by Charlotte Guterman, Andover High School

There is a swastika drawn on my copy of Night The cover is torn but 3 out of 4 Prongs are still sharp In paper clip carved contempt. I had not noticed until now and I wonder what that says about me. Am I the type of person who lets cruelty sit between my palms? The kind to let them build railroads across my eyelids Gas chambers in my throat- Is my every breath a disgrace? Is my every blink a genocide? Has my ignorance transformed me In to a factory Of death? Tell me- Do I exhale the ash of their memories? Can you count my ribs? One Two I cannot count up to 6 million I should have known I should have known I should have known this does not rewrite history I shut my eyelids and see yellow stars What kind of Jew am I that I do not know their suffering? What kind of human am I that I do not know their names? I do not remember hearing the name Holocaust Until 5th grade What kind of society is this that we keep bodies piled behind locked doors in our textbooks? That we learn from them to forget. For awhile I was furious at the kid with a paper clip and an opinion. I smeared paint all over their drawing And let it dry But I was wrong. I can still see its imprint, it's Indents and Maybe that's important Maybe I killed something sacred again. Once in forgetting and twice in choosing to- I am so sorry. I would take it back if I could but I cannot rewrite history The book pulses with my apology Remember It screams for the rest of my life.

“A New Beginning” by Megan Hartnett, Andover High School

I'm beginning to think that rain is a sign from God.
 People view it as a somber time,
 when the sky transforms
 into a bleak,
 depressed
 Eeyore type.
 When really it is a cleansing,
 A pause
 in the ever rumbling calendar of events and activities,
 a time to stop.
 The steady beat of the pattering raindrops hit buildings
 and streets,
 painting leaves a darker shade.
 The storm washes away
 the dark chalk marks on our souls,

they vanish into the whoosh of the wind.
 Instead of reminding us of our imminent morbidity,
 it gives us an opportunity,
 a chance to wipe away the markings of yesterday
 to make room for the baptism of tomorrow.
 The background noise of the calm
 Drip,
 Drip,
 drop
 provides a stillness,
 a break in the chain of commitments.
 Until the leaves dry up,
 events resume
 and the calendar begins again.
 But this time,
 God has relinquished us
 of our sin
 of our darkness
 and brightened us
 for the beginnings of a new life,
 waiting for the next rain.

“Time (High School)” by Jaleesa Molina, Greater Lawrence Technical School

Time. Seeing you in class that fall made me realize how beautiful time is. Time makes you forget how faces look, and how voices sound. Time makes you realize that people change, friends come and go, and life flies by in the blink of an eye.

Just three years ago we were freshman, all lost, all scared and all terribly unaware of where we'd end up and who we'd end up with. Three years flash forward and the friends we thought we'd always have are gone, the boys we swooned over have changed and the consistency in our lives has scattered.

Over time some got lost in the crowd, and some formed their own crowd. Time is absolutely beautiful. It helps heal open wounds, at times it forms new ones. Time brings new people in your life, people you are happy to meet and some you wish you'd never seen. Time. Time matures you and molds you, Time helps you become who you are. Time.

Time shows the growth in all of us, mentally and physically. Time is scary and frightening. Some take advantage of time and some forget its importance. Time has made us better, new and improved. Four years later and we are all still afraid of time. But time is beautiful, because in just a blink of an eye, it flies by.

“Ware wa Ningen Janai” by CJ Morse, Andover High School

In the beginning,
 Man created Time to explain the motion of the Earth revolving,
 Darkness and Light,
 We made distinction,
 The Dark is evil,
 The night time holds mystery,
 Holds no promise,
 The Light is all we need,
 Everything is brighter,
 There are no secrets

Man created Violence to explain the primal urges to kill,
 To maim,
 To hunt,
 There was Martial Art,
 A beauty wrought from the vicious intent,
 There was Brutality,
 Pure Violence in it's entirety,
 Exercising dominance,
 Alpha and Omega,
 Those are first,
 Those who will never be

Man created Vanity,
 So the ones who lay asleep while others toil in fields,
 Could justify themselves,
 I am Beauty,
 Anteros, Antheia, Aphrodite,
 I am Passion,
 I am Greater,
 I am Ego,
 I am Me.
 I am not You,
 I speak in tongues of richer men,
 Dance in the rhythms of a higher purpose...

Ware wa ningen,
 I am Human,
 With my skin reflecting the night skies,
 And hands shaping the stars,
 Taking all of our history,
 Millennia of slave and master,
 Those who rule and those who are ruled,
 Survival of the Fittest,
 The laws of our Nature,

I am Human,
 With my words, I create universes,
 And with my thoughts, I create prisons,
 I create the places where we thrive,
 And in this final testament to our legacy,
 The millennia of our struggle,
 I say it plainly,

We were Human,
 Vain, Arrogant, and Violent,
 But this land was our home,
 And like every child,

We grew up and left.

“Picture Perfect” by Tomas Morse, Andover High School

I was always good at taking pictures,
 So when it was time for another one,
 I was naturally ready.

So, I stood there, putting on my best smile,
 looking at the camera, with both eyes,
 not moving around,
 wearing my new suit
 then, the camera snapped
 I turned my head,
 The camera snapped again,
 then, I walked to back to my cell.

“Another Kind of Claustrophobia” by Hayden Rungren, Andover High School

I don't like to shower
 because every time I go to
 I end up standing in front of the mirror
 looking at the image
 of a body that's mine but feels like someone else's
 and no, it's not the wrong body
 it's the right one- it's just not who I am

I bind my chest
 because I feel uncomfortable when I don'tn
 and because I'm happier

when I can't see my breasts
or fully feel that they're there

my breasts are a constant reminder
that the majority of people can't see what I see

This is so much worse than low self-esteem
physical dysphoria alienates me in my own body
it's not that I feel like a stranger
it's more like an endless game of tug-of-war
I keep trying to see past all the physical things
but my dysphoria keeps pulling me over the edge
and turning my body into barriers

it's like coming home for the holidays
after being away at college for two years
just to find that your parents have been renting out your room
and the person who's living there is a total jackass to you

but then you find out that the tenant has a brother
who's coming over for the holidays and never leaves

I have to leave class sometimes
because while teachers ask what my pronouns are
none of the kids in my classes do

and I can't blame them for using the wrong pronouns
when I haven't told them not to,
but that doesn't make it hurt any less
when my chest is almost completely flat
and the rest of the world still tells me I'm a girl

social dysphoria makes it seem
like the entire world is your mirror
so when I hear my gym teacher say:
"Girls over there!"
I go because there's no side
for a nonbinary kid
that just wants to be recognized for who they are

"You and I" by Taylor Stevens, Andover High School

You turn night into day,
Dark into light,

It's miraculous, surreal,
Have I already lost sight?

I take a leap of faith,
Hoping it won't be my demise,
Fear courses my veins,
But I persist through butterflies.

Heart racing, I take your hand,
Interlock our arms, Interlace each finger,
The quick wisp of joy cannot help but to linger.

I wonder how this all happened so fast,
If it's not love at first sight,
Neither is black and white contrast.

You smile and it brightens the room,
Your laugh could cure the sick,
My heart, you could say, is almost consumed,

I have fallen, so hard, and oh so quick.

“Immature Me” by Sheila Tejada, Greater Lawrence Technical School

If you are like me then you've once been called **“immature”**
It doesn't matter if everyone starts from **zero**
As time goes by, everyone will seem to have grown up but **you.**
Adults will call you **immature**
Those of the same age will call you **immature**
Why? Why am I immature?

“You still play games. Pokemon and shit like that are for kids”
“Drawing is so childish! What do you draw? Stupid Japanese cartoons?”

“You are so indecisive.”

“Do you need mommy or daddy to make your own decisions?”

“You don't know how to do stuff alone”

“You need your parents to take you to places or buy things.”

“You rather stay home doing your childish stuff then socialize with people your own age.”

“You watch those lame Japanese animations”

“Anime you call it? I bet you watch tentacle porn”

“You have more online friends than real ones”

“Get a life!”

“You've never drank or kissed anyone? Maybe you are a child.”

“You protect what adults say but you are against us you can't state your own opinion, like kids”

“What kind of music is that? You don't know what real music is.”

“You cry easily”
“Oh look! See right there?”
“You are a baby after all”
I am...
immature...
Sorry...
Please forgive...
The immature me

“Society” by Sheila Tejada, Greater Lawrence Technical School

Society said:

I had to fit in, I had to be tall, I had to be thin,

I had to be stylish, I had to spend money, I had to wear makeup so I wouldn't look funny.

I had to style my hair in a certain way, and I had to act like everyone else at all times of the day.

Society changed me.

But why make a big fuss?

Because who is society really?

The answer? It's us.

Thank you to all of the poets for submitting their wonderful poems. We love to read what our talented teens can create. – Anna and Rebecca, Teen Librarians