

The poster features a white background with a large, stylized arrow shape pointing to the right. The arrow is filled with a light green color. The background is decorated with various geometric patterns: a teal triangle with vertical lines in the top right, a teal triangle with white dots in the bottom left, and a teal triangle with white diagonal lines in the bottom right. The text is arranged in a clean, modern font.

**MEMORIAL HALL**

**LIBRARY**

**TEEN POETRY CONTEST**

AWARDS

RECEPTION

MAY 3, 2017, 7PM

SPONSORED BY  
THE FRIENDS OF  
THE LIBRARY



Memorial Hall Library's  
13<sup>th</sup> Annual Teen Poetry Contest

**May 3, 2017, 7:00pm**

**Opening** – Renata Sancken and Anna Tschetter, MHL Teen Librarians

**Remarks from our Judge** – Gayle Heney

**Remarks from the Andover Poet Laureate** – Linda Haltmaier

**Middle School Honorable Mentions**

**Middle School Winners**

**High School Honorable Mentions**

**High School Winners**

**Closing Remarks** – Anna and Renata

*Thank you to the Friends of the Library for sponsoring this event and to all teens who entered!*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### MIDDLE SCHOOL WINNING POEMS ..... 1

1 <sup>ST</sup> PLACE: CHRISTINA LI, "FIRST DATE" .....	1
2 <sup>ND</sup> PLACE (TIE): TYLER PELT, "LOOKING DOWNSTREAM" .....	4
2 <sup>ND</sup> PLACE (TIE): ZOE MAVER, "AS TOLD BY A STUDENT WITH ADHD" .....	7
3 <sup>RD</sup> PLACE: STEPHANIE YANG, "POLITICAL FEVER" .....	8
TEENS' CHOICE AWARD: EVIE O'BRIEN, "LOST LIGHT" .....	9

### MIDDLE SCHOOL HONORABLE MENTION POEMS..... 10

JESSICA ANDREWS, "STONE COLD" .....	10
ADI BRISKIN, "ANXIOUS" .....	11
ADI BRISKIN, "TIRE TRACKS" .....	13
ISABEL CHAE, "WHERE I'M FROM" .....	15
ANIAH CURTIS, "BITTERSWEET BOND" .....	17
YASHVI GOSALIA, "INTO THE LOOKING GLASS" .....	18
EMILY HAMBY, "POINTE SHOES" .....	21
EMILY HUANG, "DON'T PROTECT ME" .....	22
ROHINI JOSH, "DOORKNOBS" .....	24
ARIEL KIM, "WINDOWS" .....	25
ERIN LI, "AUTUMN" .....	27
CHRISTINA LI, "VIOLINS = VIOLENCE" .....	28
KENDALL McCULLOM, "AFTER YOUTH" .....	29
KENDALL McCULLOM, "UNFATHOMABLE FIRE" .....	31
MAGGIE McGLYNN, "SUNSET" .....	32
CHLOE MEES, "DREAMING IT" .....	34
CHLOE MEES, "REALIZING IT" .....	36
IVAN QIN, "SATIRE AND SLEEP" .....	37
SAM RACCA, "ODE TO THE EYEBROW" .....	39
CAROLINE SAMOLUK, "COLORS" .....	41
DANIELLE SILVA, "ALL THE SMALL THINGS" .....	42
CHEN-CHEN SONG, "THE BELT" .....	43
CHEN-CHEN SONG, "THE OLD MAN OF TIME" .....	45
CHEN-CHEN SONG, "THE SHIP THAT SHOULDN'T HAVE SUNK" .....	47
STEPHANIE YANG, "BEFORE" .....	53

**HIGH SCHOOL WINNING POEMS.....55**

1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE: NATALIE GOOD, “THE EARTH WAS NOT MADE FOR MOTHERHOOD” .....55  
2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE: OLIVIA HAUSER, “THE PREFERRED MEDICINE” ....57  
3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE: CHARLOTTE GUTERMAN, “TRAGEDIES OF HISTORY AND HOW TO WRITE ABOUT THEM” ..... 58  
TEENS’ CHOICE AWARD: VINNY TETIVA, “THE MISUNDERSTOOD HOOD” .....59

**HIGH SCHOOL HONORABLE MENTION POEMS .62**

SAADWI BALAJI, “FLY INTO THE CRIMSON” ..... 62  
JULIA BECKWITH, “EVERY SUNRISE IS A SUNSET, SOMEWHERE” ..... 64  
JULIA BECKWITH, “THE UNIVERSE IS EXPANDING, ACCORDING TO MY ASTRONOMY TEXTBOOK” .....65  
EMMA BROWN, “THE BRINGER OF WAR” .....65  
DAVID FRYKENBERG, “CIRCLE OF LIGHT” ..... 66  
NATALIE GOOD, “THE KING OF SHADOWS” .....67  
NATALIE GOOD, “A STUDY OF SPIDERS” ..... 70  
CHARLOTTE GUTERMAN, “IN THE EVENT OF A MOON DISASTER” ..... 71  
RORY HALTMAIER, “THE FOREST, A SONNET” .....72  
RORY HALTMAIER, “SLIPPING UNDER” .....73  
ROANDY HERRERA, “I AM FROM MOM” .....75  
EMILY JACKSON, “THE WAY IN” .....75  
ELISSA LONIE, “DRUGS” .....77  
THERESE PELLETIER, “THE REFUGEE” .....79  
KAYLEE SOSTRE, “GROWING UP, LAWTOWN” ..... 80

## MIDDLE SCHOOL WINNING POEMS

### **1<sup>st</sup> Place Middle School:**

### **“First Date,” Christina Li, Doherty Middle School**

So the other day, this guy  
came up to me  
and tapped me on the shoulder.  
He asked me  
if I wanted to hang out  
with him  
Sorry, I have stuff to do,  
I said  
Oh, but can't you do it later?  
he returned  
I thought about  
my unfinished lab report  
my half-done slam poem  
and the concerto I hadn't started practicing yet  
But you know--  
the kid was kind of cute  
he had warm brown eyes  
with a twinkle of mischief in them  
a dash of freckles  
on his caramel tinted face  
and a smooth lilt

to his voice

You know the type?

I looked at the clock

only 3:30--

Plenty of time.

“Sure,” I answered.

We played Clash Royale

and pushed all the way to Builder’s Workshop

with the classic “Trifecta” deck

We laughed at memes

from the increasingly verbose

to classic doge and pupper

But you know--

rain drop

drop top

dank memes gotta stop

So we binge watched Youtube

from Try Not to Laugh challenges

And “Honest Trailers”

to Dan and Phil

and nigahiga

Suddenly

my mom walked in

she asked me

what I was doing  
and when I'd go to bed.  
and that was when I realized  
It was 9:30.  
I thought about  
my unfinished lab report  
my half-done slam poem  
and the concerto I hadn't started practicing yet  
I thought about  
the seven games of Clash Royale  
that we played  
the 40% of battery life  
we spent looking up memes  
and the thirty minute Skitzos  
that we watched  
Whoops.  
I apologized to the guy  
and asked him to leave  
he looked at me  
with those warm brown eyes  
just one more video?  
he pleaded  
It would be cool  
to see a glowing 1000 degree knife versus Coca Cola --

But I had work to do.  
I turned my back on him  
and started working on my lab report  
I heard him walk away--  
dejected  
I haven't seen him since.  
I felt guilty for a while  
and I realized  
I never asked him his name.  
But when I found out,  
I knew I had made the right choice--  
For his name was Procrastination.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Place Middle School (Tie):  
“Looking Downstream,” Tyler Pelt, West Middle School**

In the future  
I want to steer the ship  
Call the stroke  
Plan the trip  
  
I will never dread the water  
Just befriend it  
Use it to my advantage  
Comprehend it

In the future

I want to make the team

Win the race

Live the dream

I will teach the class

Be a role model

Motivate the students

Be their idol

In the future

I will go to states

Make an impact

Control my fate

I want to be the champion

Make it clear

That anyone in the world

Can conquer their fear

Because that's what's holding you back

If life's a war

You gotta attack

You can't wait

You can't do the minimum

You only get so much

Of the time continuum

I'll tell 'em to conquer their fears

Change the gears

Don't let their lives be dragged along

Wipe off the tears

In the future

I will be inspirational

Prove that anybody

Can be sensational

I'll show the people

To never quit

It's 1% inspiration

99% grit

I want to leave a legacy

For people to aspire

That they can demolish their obstacles

Burn them down like a fire

Life is a flower

It can't grow in the dark

Push away the clouds

**2<sup>nd</sup> Place Middle School (Tie):**

**“As told by a student with ADHD,” Zoe Maver, The Pike School**

My mind works a little differently.

It's an intricate system

That connects in different places

One thing always reminds me of something else.

To an outsider, it looks like a mess of thoughts.

To me, it makes perfect sense

Constantly shifting in my seat,

Or staring off into space.

Instead of paying attention to the lesson on quadratics,

I am wondering why seahorses are called seahorses.

It's true, I do get distracted

But I also notice little things

That other people might not.

The color of someone's earrings during a conversation;

Or the veins on someone's hand.

Every day in class,

"Stop talking"

"Stop fidgeting"

"You need to focus"

Focus

That word rings in my head.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Place Middle School:  
"Political fever," Stephanie Yang, The Pike School**

At first,

There was peace.

In a tranquil town,

On a mild winter day,

Riding on a quiet breeze,

It came.

There!

A spark.

A blot on a map

Glowing red,

And spreads.

Next,

A frenzy—

The color won't stop!

An uncontrollable dilemma that whips through the skies,  
Sweeping through the nation,  
That colors the map a crimson blood red.

Finally,  
It expends its energy,  
Sputters to a stop,  
And leaves behind slit throats and angry cries.  
The map fades to a dull matte pink.

After,  
There is peace  
And it is quiet  
In the broken town,  
A quiet breeze dances through the remnants of a passionate  
argument,  
Until the fever is sparked anew.

**Teens' Choice Award Middle School: "Lost Light," Evie  
O'Brien, West Middle School**

One Two Three  
Breathe  
Breathe the air from the giving trees  
Four five six

Feel

Feel the golden gleam of the cold clear rushing stream

Seven eight nine

Shine

The sphere of light falling through the cracks of the thick wood

Ten eleven twelve

Gone

Gone the path you've known so long

My heart is racing on a track, then I see the shiny crack

Through the wood but oh so clear

The beautiful light giving sphere

Thirteen fourteen fifteen

Light

I can see my homelike sight

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL HONORABLE MENTION POEMS**

### **“Stone Cold,” Jessica Andrews, The Pike School**

It's hard as a rock

It's invincible.

Well almost.

It can handle the sharp edge of a hockey blade,

can hold up the weight of people and vehicles without cracking.

can even endure the force of drills

but it can't handle everything.

It can't withstand a warm spring day,  
small flowing river,  
or a sunny winter day that all the kids are so thankful for.  
It never sees the smile on their faces  
when they get out for school in the summer.  
It never sees families going to the beach together.  
It is destroyed by the thing that most people find comforting,  
Warmth.  
The thing that almost everyone finds harmless,  
that people look forward to in winter.  
If it is exposed to warmth  
it melts down to nothing  
it dissolves until the only thing left is a puddle of water.

**“Anxious,” Adi Briskin, Doherty Middle School**

It lurks  
In the depths of my being  
It hides  
In the dark of my soul  
Patiently watching  
Waiting to spring out  
Snarl and growl  
Sink its teeth into my chest  
Rip out my heart and shred it

Break every bone

Trash every tooth

I can feel it

Breathing, hating

Perking up at every mistake

Each wrong answer

Awkward comment

Silly question

Feeds its spite, and

Fuels the flame

Until

When it is dark and quiet

No more conversation

To fill the air

Distract my mind

Then, it pounces

And under I go

I beg with it

To let me go

As usual, it shows no mercy

Soon, my strangled screams subside

There is no war here to be won

This monster cannot be killed

I know that,  
So why bother fight?

People ask,  
Are you okay?

I'm fine.

**“Tire Tracks,” Adi Briskin, Doherty Middle School**

Tire tracks stretching for e v e r  
Away from a storm that has no end  
The only clue that hundreds of people,  
Hungry and desperate,  
Tired and hopeless  
Falling apart and stitched back together  
With a bit of thread and a needle,  
Passed through

Tire tracks stretching for e v e r  
Along the dry and barren earth  
Scorched  
Parched for a drop of rain  
Parched for a moment  
Free of the dust

Tire tracks stretching for e v e r  
Into the great unknown  
To a better world  
A brighter future  
Where the soil is rich  
And the air clean  
And wheat as bright as gold  
Where tumbleweeds  
And withered shrubs  
Are not all that remains  
Of what you once called home

Da says they're cowards  
Afraid to stay and fight  
He says they took what they could  
From the earth  
And now  
When there's nothing more to be taken  
They leave  
Migrants  
Da says the word like a curse  
Spits it out  
And it lies on our floor

Among the dust  
That Ma couldn't sweep away  
Migrants  
Maybe they're cowards  
Da's usually right  
But sometimes I stare at those tire tracks  
That stretch into the distance

And wish that Da was a coward, too.

**“Where I’m From,” Isabel Chae, Doherty Middle School**

I am from the places I go to hide  
Music and books and dreams  
Of perfection  
I'm from  
Leaving Mainard on a chilly March day and now Andover  
The tree stand and blue rocks of Cherrywood  
The way the gravel felt beneath my feet  
Home  
I'm from being a child and running faster than anything  
Perfect scores, effortless  
Skipping down the halls with Lizzy hand in hand  
While behind me stood my mom with the camera  
2 x 4 around the world, that's where I'm from

6 x 8 around the room and Isabel Zhou  
Screaming with me on the playground and laughing  
I'm from drifting together and then apart  
Katie's peanut butter and the treehouse and her mother with  
glasses  
I'm from the country I founded,  
And being taught to love by that same willful person  
Who with me was the leader  
Dollar ladies and apples and pineapple t-shirts were different  
things  
In our eyes  
The blind, perfect eyes of fifth grade  
I'm from  
Living and dying a thousand times  
From heartbreak and burdens too heavy and fresh starts like a  
sheet of white paper  
New school and old school and classic rock  
Sixth grade betrayal  
I'm from seventh grade and the outgrowing of toys and games  
Seventh grade, Billy Joel  
And the pilings of guilt for who I should be  
What I could be  
And what I am  
And the difference between the three

I'm from open-eyed nights  
 Silent stars blackening and bluing and me  
 Beneath them reading  
 From  
 Eighth grade and the poor crumpled leaves, dying on our driveway  
 The sprinkled snow that melts quickly into the hard frozen ground  
 Eighth grade and taking risks  
 Playing the game to win and being scared of  
 Hockey pucks  
 Blank sheets of paper  
 Normal  
 I'm from eighth grade and finality  
 Dusted pine trees and God  
 Headphones and no vegetables, thanks  
 Laptops and emptiness  
 Losing myself and then finding myself with someone else  
 The Poisonwood Bible and Gone With The Wind and  
 Looking forward to tomorrow

**“Bittersweet Bond,” Aniah Curtis, The Pike School**

Shall I compare thee to winter's harsh nights?  
 Thou art more blustery and more frigid.  
 Pure white snow does glisten under street lights,  
 And white-encased trees do stand quite rigid.

Sometime too harsh the sky's pearly flakes fall,  
And often her children do drift and roam.  
For our Mother's loose grasp acts as a shawl,  
And encases over our fragile dome.  
But thy slippery slopes shall never fade  
Nor lose touch of the ice thou borrow.  
Nor shall joy brag of the light thou hath made  
When all good things hold a dash of sorrow.  
So long as languages and arts stay fond,  
So long lives this, our strange, bittersweet bond.

**“Into the Looking Glass,” Yashvi Gosalia, West Middle School**

Once upon a time in a land  
very close to to here, I met a girl.  
She was the most perfect I had ever seen.  
She had the most beautiful features,  
was popular at school, liked by her teachers.

I asked her,  
“Aren’t you so happy?”  
“Aren’t you living the dream?”

She told me,

“No.

It’s all a mask anyway.”

One by one, she proceeded to take  
off her peeling, cracking facades.

She had so many disguises  
for so many people;  
teachers, friends, parents, strangers.

See, each one  
gave her a different personality  
to match the situation perfectly.

And that’s what she was,  
Perfect,  
right?

Until finally, she showed me her face.  
The one she used when she was  
alone.

It was the most vulnerable,  
most open, most  
cripplingly beautiful one.

Her true face made me fall to my knees,

made me gasp in heartache,  
made me unable to look away at the  
tumultuous vortex of insecurities floating around-  
a stunning contrast with her brightly painted,  
half-stuck on,  
please-don't-let-them-see-the-gaps  
smile.

She sighed heavily,  
as if the weight of each facade  
were an eternal burden on her curved-in shoulders,  
her callused hands, and they were.

She then carefully, precisely,  
(hands shaking minutely)  
put each mask back on her face,  
a plethora of jagged edges mashed together.

I was once again looking at her previous disguise,  
her face happily fake.

I think the girl I had been talking to  
was the one  
in the mirror.

**“Pointe Shoes,” Emily Hamby, Doherty Middle School**

Soft and clean,  
sleeping before class.  
The ribbon lacing up my ankle.

The shoe in its happy place.  
Ripped and scuffed,  
its life fleeting.

Breaking down  
everytime my ankles point.  
Slowly falling apart,  
fulfilling their destiny.

No longer stiff and strong  
dying.  
My feet part with them saying goodbye.  
Hanging on my door  
where they lie,  
forever and always.

Carrying me  
through life,  
bringing joy.

**“Don’t Protect Me,” Emily Huang, The Pike School**

I know what happened.

I know what you know,

So don't protect me.

Don't cover my eyes

As if covering the bright glare of a light I cannot look upon.

Don't embrace me with your limp arms

That hold no emotion,

Yet you tighten them around my stomach

And force the air out of my lungs.

If only I had something to breathe for.

Something to inhale, to exhale,

Something worth living to see, to feel.

But you are here,

Ready to surround me and envelop me.

You, You're ready to encase me

In a bubble

In an airtight container

You try to shield me

From things I know.

You try to shield me from reality.

You're trying to keep me locked in the bubble.

But for good or bad?

For luck or curse?

I try to break the bubble  
That you've sealed me in,  
But I'm gasping...gasping...  
Gasping, fighting for another breath.  
And you,  
You're here with your ready palms  
And your pitiful eyes.  
You mean the pity for me,  
But I know the pity comes from within.  
Within your soul, within your mind.  
Leaking out of every pore is  
Pity. Pity, pity, pity.  
You pity me so.  
You wipe away your crocodile tears  
And reach for me  
As if I would welcome the embrace.  
As if I truly desire to be held  
Like a child.  
A confused, lonely child.  
A naive, stupid little child.  
Oh, how deserving I am of your pity.  
But I know what happened,  
So don't try to protect me.

**“Doorknobs,” Rohini Josh, Wood Hill Middle School**

I live on a new wooden door  
and sparkle as I twist around  
When a hand turns me  
Soon, night perches on the window-sill  
The humans have gone to bed  
I giggle and chat with the others  
They are far away, but I can see them still  
When morning creeps up again

Before long, I am forgotten  
I have become invisible,  
An everyday object  
Years pass and my golden shine  
Has dulled to a brassy glow  
Yet I still fulfill my duty  
And in the nights,  
When I talk to my friends  
I know they have dulled, too

My humans have gone  
But their children and grandchildren stay  
I touch small hands again  
They are barely able to reach me

But I am glad for the careless grasp  
Of hands that tell me  
That I am useful and needed  
I think I love these humans

So many years pass  
That the children have grown up  
And the humans have left  
When we finally hear  
Human voices again  
I think I will serve them faithfully too  
But when they see us,  
They see our ugly brown colour  
They see our rusty locks and old keyholes  
I know that they do not want us  
We are taken away

**“Windows,” Ariel Kim, West Middle School**

On the darkest of nights  
All I can see  
  
Is my visage  
Upon the reflective window  
Wavering with the doubt inside

And I find myself  
Thinking about me

I fidget with my ebony hair  
Wrinkling my nose  
I will never be enough for me  
And I am blind to see  
The green monster I've become

But if I look closely  
I can view what lies  
beyond myself  
and see the myriad stars  
Glimmer in the cobalt blue sky

The busy streets below  
Bristling with people  
Who look like ants  
Each and every one  
Just like me

They speed past the mournful trees  
Whose leaves were stolen  
By the biting winter cold

Not sparing a moment  
To stop and listen  
To the whispers in the wind  
And I wonder  
If we will all be able  
To see past our reflections  
And look through the window

**“Autumn,” Erin Li, Doherty Middle School**

As the wind starts crooning,  
the leaves start twirling and dancing,  
Falling into the earth’s big hug.

I can see Autumn,  
Spinning towards us,  
almost here,  
holding her paintbrushes in her hands.

She painted the world again,  
like a professional artist.  
Red, orange and yellow.  
Controlling all the colors just right.

The crops start stretching,

showing their ripened faces.

She flew by the river,  
carrying a handful of water,  
sprinkling down the bright sky,  
Drip drop drip drop drip drop  
Playing a symphony of Autumn.  
Carrying blessings and happiness,  
sinking into the ground,  
and the farmer's heart.

Slowly,  
Autumn walked away,  
without any sound,  
leaving all the beauty and cheers behind.

**“Violins = Violence,” Christina Li, Doherty Middle School**

I unsheathe my sword  
Nestled in plush velvet  
The carved masterpiece lies  
I grasp it with a gentle hand  
Its wooden hilt smooth against my rough palm  
Sharpening it with a block of rosin  
I ready myself  
Looking at the general for commands

His baton shows a down beat  
I leap into action  
Joining my comrades with a deafening tremolo  
The sea of trumpets blast a motif  
While the timpani fires opening shots

And after the war has been fought  
We look back  
And see the lifeless corpse of our general  
Dead from our atrocious intonation.  
We stand there in reverent silence  
Mourning the loss of our leader

When he stirs  
And coughs up blood  
He glares at us and says

“Again.”

**“After Youth,” Kendall McCullom, The Pike School**

After taking the first steps  
and speaking your first word  
After stretches of smiles  
After giggling matches

and hug attacks

After endless scribbles

After gazing up at the stars

Until the intimidation subsides

After climbing to the tip of the earth

and running free with the wind

After leaping over lava filled puddles

and waging war on foes

After flying high in the sky

and adventuring around the world

After bursts of endless energy

and excitement in every step

After constant entertainment

After innocence

and youth

After the perfect vision of the world

and a shield from all things bad

After becoming bored

and wanting more

After the envy

and standing on the sidelines

as others succeed  
After the need to mature,  
you realize how precious  
and safe life was before.

**“Unfathomable Fire,” Kendall McCullom, The Pike School**

It explodes into the darkness  
as orange as the sun  
and as bright as heaven  
but summoned by the devil.

It reaches  
like a mother for her drowning child,  
frantic.

Its crackles are no longer soothing summer evenings  
of marshmallow roasting and campfire songs  
nor cold winter mornings  
when log after log is tossed into the pit  
trying to sustain a normal temperature.  
It has become more than the quick flick of the wrist  
that lights cigarettes and candles.

Eventually, it achieves its goal,  
and everything erupts into chaos.  
It feasts on hard work and accomplishments,  
destroying memory after memory.

As it licks the edges,  
they turn black  
and begin to disintegrate  
like everything it has ever touched.

Gone in a matter of minutes,  
Everything,  
turned into nothing.

**“Sunset,” Maggie McGlynn, Doherty Middle School**

There wasn't one moment

There wasn't a switch that was flipped

There wasn't a candle that flickered out of existence

There wasn't a pulse that suddenly stopped

There wasn't a heart that immediately shattered

It was a process

The sun sets slowly

It leaves like a gentle wind

Not knowing the beautiful light that it had shed on the world until  
a new day begins

Falling out of love is beautiful

Much like a sunset

It takes time

It takes work

But it happens

And once it does and you realize you're finally free

It's as if a breath of fresh new air has been blown into your lungs

A sunrise is beautiful

And in this case a sunrise is falling for someone

But when the sunrises there's always the guarantee that the day  
will escape us

And the sun will again set

But in some cases

The sun will get an extra hour

And that's what happens when we find someone we can't live  
without

Someone we love

And we stay with that person through the darkness and the night

I didn't get an extra hour  
We didn't get an extra hour  
And the sun in gone

Tomorrow it will rise  
And see the light

But for now it stays hidden by the moon and the stars

**“Dreaming It,” Chloe Mees, West Middle School**

A dark night  
but not empty.

Trudging through a damp autumn evening,  
my dad, my telescope, the universe,  
the stars and me

I'm no longer lost,

I am found in the constellations.

My passion.

My direction.

We look up at the Moon, Venus, and Mars.

Line up the telescope

click

Perfect.

I am inspired to get there,

into space.

Be amongst the voyagers  
of the Starship Enterprise,  
explore Mars with Mark Watney,  
become one of Natalie Holt's  
"Rocket Girls."

Of course,  
in my own way.

I connect them to me.

Strive on their strength.

Let them water me like a plant  
until it's time for me to sprout.

The questions  
that once echoed within me,  
the uncertainty that overwhelmed me,  
have vanished.

I step out of the past  
forward to the future  
but dream in the now.

And one day  
those dreams will come true.

**“Realizing It,” Chloe Mees, West Middle School**

A dark, vast

pool of emptiness.

I tread lightly in the black water,

ignoring all hints

all clues.

All their questions

pressuring me,

confusing me.

What will my future hold?

What do I want it to?

Blind, lost, and ever so indecisive,

I overlook

my love for nature,

space, life,

science.

I sit patiently in my bubble,

waiting for someone,

for something

to show me the way.

Ignorant,

I delay my future,

I disregard the clues.

Digging a hole

that I didn't want to leave.  
Until the signs  
were too obvious to ignore.  
The clues carved a cavernous path,  
all leading in the same direction.  
Toward the future,  
my future.  
The telescope, the book,  
so many answers flooding into me  
drowning me.  
The light at the end of the tunnel  
finally in sight  
shining,  
guiding me,  
was the final clue.  
It was a star.

**“Satire and Sleep,” Ivan Qin, Doherty Middle School**

When the lights dim  
The candles blown out  
And the little children are  
tucked deep  
into their cozy beds  
You, O Sleep,

Enters town.

You bring along with you  
dreams of wonder, excitement,  
And happiness  
But, O Sleep, you also come along with  
Dreadful images of dark, evil madmen,  
Terrifying serpents from the underworld  
And, of course, the worst possible scenario,  
A whole two hours of ELA class.

However, how sympathetic you can be.  
Accompanied by fluffy, plushy pillows  
And warm, wooly blankets  
You occupy a half of the day,  
The comfort of your oblivion,  
The solace of your stupor.  
You, O Sleep, wash my troubles away  
Helping me to forget  
about all the horrors of the day

You, Sleep,  
Are a powerful being.  
After all, even Mom's breakfast

is not worth waking me up for

Sleep,

A mysterious entity.

The master of them all

The king of the dark

The ruler of the night

When it comes to forgetting

about my homework,

O sleep, you are so kind

—A stark contrast to the alarm clock.

**“Ode to the Eyebrow,” Sam Racca, Doherty Middle School**

Today you woke up

And you were tired

So tired your eyebrow said

“Why am I so gosh darn flat”?

Your eyebrow screaming

To be arched

Into a perfect

Beautiful

Point

So sharp

It could cut a tree  
So you fixed it  
Went on your phone and thought  
You could make it sharper  
And you could make it perfect.

So you filled it in  
Until there were no more  
Empty spaces  
Like the empty spaces in life.

You walk into school  
And see people smiling  
Saying things to others and laughing  
All and everywhere  
All around just endless miles  
Of smiles  
Yes, wherever you go  
You see smiles.  
You see smiles when they see  
And they tell you

You forgot about the other brow.

**“Colors,” Caroline Samoluk, The Pike School**

I hear the roar of the waves and the squawking of the gulls.

I can feel the wind tearing at my face and the sand squish and crumble beneath me.

People have told me it is beautiful.

The color of the water,  
the shape of the clouds in the sky.

The way the wind makes the reeds bow.

So many colors, a rainbow they call it.

I have often spent many a day wondering,  
what does a rainbow look like?

what do colors look like?

I guess I will never know I take my stick and I follow the winding  
path

Down, down, down to the beach.

My dog runs ahead of me and barks

He has found the perfect spot.

I sit down.

I feel him lie down next to me

My face is turned to the ocean

Soaking in the light of the sun

But all I see is darkness I like the ocean I don't need to see to  
understand it.

I can hear it calling,

feel it moving, smell its perfume and taste its tears It is all I have.

But, it is enough.

It has to be enough.

**“All the small things,” Danielle Silva, Doherty Middle School**

C

Sunsets and sunrises, we only get so many,

Cm7

but people throw them away each day like pennies.

F

We only realize what we have given up once it's too late,

C

Cm7

It's funny how we start to appreciate things once they're out of reach.

F G7

There's peace in the smallest moments, like listening to the calm rain during a storm,

Am

with no burden of losing them.

Dm D G7 C

Material goods don't make us happy, and they have the impossible task of filling a bottomless pit. Happiness comes from within, and once

Cm7

F

you realize that, life loses its heavy weight.

C Cm7 F A7

How are we supposed to stay gold when all we see is rust, people treating others inhumanly, with hate in their eyes. We should cherish

C

Cm7 F

the small moments and do what gives us purpose. We should stay mindful of ourselves and the world around us, being careful not to let

F

C C

F

anything slip through the cracks. We should take care of each other, and remember that we're all apart of a bigger picture, a better

Am

D

picture. We remember it's about quality, not quantity, and one is better than none.

C F Am

So next time you find yourself with true bliss in your heart, take a second to capture every detail, because someday it's going to be all

F

you'll have left.

### **“The Belt,” Chen-chen Song, The Pike School**

The long brown belt hovers for a moment  
suspended in time

moving down

slow,

slower,

sloooooower.

Its ribbon-like body curves through the air  
a venomous snake attacking its frightened prey  
a sneaky wolf pouncing on the innocent deer.

And then it strikes.

Snap!

A pain shoots through my body  
the belt arches back up.

Bam!

The evil belt hits me again  
the cold metal of the buckle  
branding my skin with a searing heat.

Crack!

The rough leather whips me with a relentless energy  
angry,  
apoplectic,  
aggressive.

And once again time freezes  
everything around me ceases to exist  
just me, the belt, and...

Everything goes dark.

**“The Old Man of Time,” Chen-chen Song, The Pike School**

Time always seems to be moving too quickly  
and I'm nothing but a blind cat attempting in vain to catch a  
mouse,  
the prey agilely slipping through my claws  
before I can grab it and hold it back.  
I was greeted home today with too much work  
and not enough time  
a snowdrift of papers and binders piling up on my desk  
not a burst of color or excitement to brush the dead white canvas.  
So I go to meet the Old Man of Time  
a wise old creature  
with knowledge greater than  
the silvery waterfall  
of gray hairs falling from his chin.  
I have trekked a thousand miles  
through mountains of homework and essays  
through valleys of exhaustion  
through rapids of wasted time and frustration.  
The journey is long  
and the work bears down heavier on my aching back  
like Atlas holding up the sky on his bare shoulders.  
But finally I have arrived  
atop the glowing golden hill

with the gorgeous sun gracefully rising from the East.

The old man sits with a gilded halo framing his face.

He smiles

a canyon of wrinkles etching into his face of weathered stone

his twinkling eyes the sun and the moon

one gold, one silver, both clearer and brighter than the rest of his wrinkled complexion.

“Time,” he says,

“I cannot control. Only you can do that.”

“Careful,” he says,

“Time is as long as you want, as short as you fear. It is up to you to choose.”

“Go,” he says,

“There is no time to waste. Use what you need and enjoy the rest.”

And with that he’s gone

a light bulb shattering on the ground

a flash of brightness that electrifies the air

buzzing through my veins the way cars rush down the crowded highway.

And then I realize

yes, the old man is right.

Time is a river

and those who allow themselves to be ripped away by the current are forever lost.

But if you fight the water

stand your ground without letting the powerful stream overtake  
you,

there will always be a better tomorrow

and the force of the flow will chisel your mind to perfection.

So no time will escape you

for you now have that small block of cheese,

just enough to lure in the mouse

and a quick swipe of the paw is enough for the cat to win.

**“The Ship that Shouldn’t Have Sunk,” Chen-chen Song,  
The Pike School**

*John Davis: First-Class steward of the Titanic*

In the background

a band had been sitting in the corner

of the dining hall,

playing the lilting melody of a sad summery song

fingers plucking the strings

feet tapping the pedals

heads bobbing to the beat.

Fine ladies and gentlemen had been sitting at their little tables

with my flower and candle centerpiece

distractedly pushed to the side for the sake of conversation.

One young lady knocked her plate to the ground

and I'd winced

thinking of the hours after they have left

of cleaning and mopping.

It wasn't until someone pulled at my arm  
that I finally came back to my senses.

A little boy, no more than four or five  
pouted as he shifted uncomfortably in his neat little suit,

“Excuse me, sir?” he had asked,  
“I think something’s wrong.

The boat stopped making those funny sounding chugging noises!  
And look! What’s that thing over there?

I don’t think it’s supposed to be in the water.  
Maybe we’re supposed to take it out?

My mummy and dad won’t listen to me though.”

I recall looking sideways where his little finger was pointing  
and I recall that my heart stopped beating for a moment

for looming at the head of the boat  
a sheer wall of ice poked out from the icy water,  
a clear, shining grey-blue under the dying light.

It extended high into the air  
and down to the bottom of the ocean  
and I was awed by the size of it  
the hard wall of ice taller than a mountain  
the steady light of the dying sun making the  
crest of the hill sparkle and glow.

A beautiful, intriguing sight it had been

but so dangerous  
 yet in the most elegant way  
 so fluid and but so solid  
 icy perfection standing tall above all.  
 And then my mind had flown into panic mode  
 as I turned to warn the passengers  
 warn the captain  
 warn the stewards  
 warn the nurses  
 when the little boy tugged on my crisp navy sleeve again.  
 “Mister? Do you know what it is? Can I tell Mummy that she can  
 look now?”  
 “Yes, yes,” I quickly rushed out, “go tell your mummy.”  
 And he ran away.  
 I never saw that little boy again.

*Louis Thompson: Third-Class passenger of the Titanic*

The entire boat tips,  
 and my fingers fly faster than a tiger pouncing on its prey to grab  
 the side rail  
 pulling my feet up above the wave  
 agile from years of running away from angry vendors  
 after stealing food for my hungry family.  
 Yes,  
 my starving, tired, uneducated sisters

they are who I'm doing it for,  
and my mother too  
if this boat sinks and everything goes down  
I'd swim across a thousand miles of freezing ocean for them  
because if I don't make it to my apprenticeship in America  
my family will  
starve  
slowly  
to death.

I shudder at the thought as a second wave slices on board  
like a wildfire spreading through a dry forest  
I pull myself up on the rail again  
when something smacks sharply across my back.  
I turn and lunge to grab the hand of a little girl  
her little mouth opens in a screaming 'O'  
the sound swallowed by the deafening roar of the tumultuous  
waves  
her hair runs wild like a lion's mane  
her fingers dig into my hand like a dragon's claw  
her soaking cotton dress clinging to her wet, freezing skin.  
I'm thinking of how much she reminds me of my sisters  
when the boat suddenly lurches again  
people who aren't fast enough are  
gone, sliding and smashing into metal poles.

I cringe

wishing I could save them too.

But I can't, and as the boat sinks a little further

I know there's only one way out of this mess

I gently reach down and pull the little girl into my aching arms

burning fire and heat scorching under my skin

as my exhausted muscles pull and strain.

I tell her to hold on

tight.

I turn

bend my knees

take one last deep breath

and look at the majestic Titanic one last time.

I jump.

Gone is the ticket to America

the one that I spent two years of tireless labor saving up for.

Gone is my simple dream

the one to safely land in America and take the apprenticeship.

Gone is my plan to surprise my mum

the one with the big paycheck so the girls won't have to go to bed hungry again.

Gone is everything I thought I was finally going to have

like the first snowflake, melting away on the ground.

So as I drop down so fast that my stomach feels like it's still hanging up in the air

I tear my eyes open  
 the last thing I see as the boat falls away  
 and the ocean rushes nearer  
 is the little girl  
 I press her close to my chest  
 and hope that we'll make it--  
 For all the dreams that have now been lost.

*Stella Highland: Doctor on board of the Carpathia*

Bodies.

Hundreds and hundreds of them  
 ranging from living, to dying, to dead  
 all lying on starched sheets  
 used so many times that that they look more  
 like the color of a windswept desert  
 feels more  
 like the coarse dry sand that prickles against your skin.  
 Such a horrible tragedy  
 so many beautiful souls both old and young  
 bursting with hope and joy,  
 and excitement for America.  
 I gently reach over and pull the dry sheet over a man's head  
 my heart sinking as I look at his face  
 at least he has finally found peace

forever.

These people

which once must have been so full of life  
with mighty structures made of the toughest metals,  
and hearts of pure silver and gold,  
have now been reduced to nothing more  
than a thin glass frame  
delicate, vulnerable  
and only one mishap away from the end.

**Stephanie Yang, “Before,” The Pike School**

Before there was a world of things,  
Consuming, and wanting, and needing;

Before there were wars,  
Bringing disaster and destruction;

Before the "discovery" of new lands  
And new peoples, and new cultures

Before the first tools were made,  
And we learned to invent and innovate;

Before we were aware of all of our faults,

And we were told not to hate;

Before we thought about how things looked,  
Guitling, and shaming, and selling;

Before we cared about who owned what,  
And where the borderlines were drawn;

Before we decided to label,  
European, straight, different;

Before we learned,  
And burdened children with homework;

Before we were defined by numbers,  
Grades, likes, and digits;

The world was just color floating in an empty universe,  
But before, we didn't exist.

## HIGH SCHOOL WINNING POEMS

### **1<sup>st</sup> Place High School: “The Earth was not made for motherhood,” Natalie Good, The Cambridge School of Weston**

You used to learn about me  
when you were young.

You marveled at my changing leaves,  
my eruptions of lava and smoke,  
my trees with rings circling back to the beginning of time

But when you were older  
you threw dust in my face,  
closed fingers around my throat,  
and ripped the coal from my chest

Then you left me,  
shredding limbs of trees  
into green seas  
flowing into your pockets.

Now you call the rope you tied around my neck a hoax,  
a money-making opportunity  
invented by foreigners  
to churn you into butter between their fingertips

But deep down,  
hidden somewhere between  
your heart, your hope, and your brain,  
I think you feel it.

You notice when snow falls in May,  
and you notice when you have to shed your coat  
for a December's warmth

You've heard about the bees that disappear,  
the island of garbage afloat in Texas,  
the corals that vomit out life and leave themselves blank

but you snap your neck to other things,  
other papers,  
other articles, and pray that you'll still be able to sing to your  
grandchildren  
about snow and honey.

You say that I can live through this,  
and you ignore the scars that you carved into me,  
but I didn't survive this long for you.  
Trees don't grow so you can carve your initials into them,  
and cells don't divide to buy you  
a new flatscreen TV.

This ship of my body exists for more than you,  
 and if you don't treat me right,  
 I will swallow you whole.

But above all,  
 this:  
 When you die,  
 you will return back into my arms,  
 and the life force of your body will come back and feed me.  
 Make sure I have something worth holding onto  
 for the little time I have left.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Place High School: “The Preferred Medicine,” Olivia Hauser, Andover High School**

Forgetting is the preferred medicine  
 Except memories have no mercy  
 I can try and try and try, will myself  
 To forget the way my heart broke every time he screamed at mom  
 To forget how fast I'd run past the bedroom at night to avoid the empty  
 “I love yous”  
 To forget how I got that tiny scar on my left wrist  
 To forget how hard I'd kick my legs in the air to avoid another  
 mark on my face

To forget how many times I stood in the driveway barefoot,  
begging mom to put her car back in park, not to leave us with him

To forget how the walls acquired their many gaping holes

To forget how hard I hit the floor screaming with tear soaked  
cheeks that one night in August

To forget how nights like that were the norm

To forget how the house shook from screaming and crying every  
day

To forget how fast the tears pooled in my eyes the day I was told to  
dial 911

Forgetting is the preferred medicine

Except sometimes you're not the one who's sick

### **3rd Place High School: "Tragedies of History and How to Write About Them," Charlotte Guterman, Andover High School**

1.

find blurry photographs first.

this way nothing will hurt as much when you can't distinguish  
faces

or arms from legs. if this does not work pretend you can not  
recognize the dead.

2.

put these photographs in frames on your dresser

or folded up in your suitcase with travel brochures and still warm  
shirts

remember how your body warms

fills spaces up snags itself on the edges of new photographs still  
looks for empty spaces to travel

draw without looking

onto your hand.

let the ink bleed out and stain from years forgotten.

3.

catch the ink on a page. let it soak through and feed it more.  
(tragedy is mostly ravenous)(documentation is often hunger) sop  
it up with your arms until the table is clean. cry anyway.

4.

examine your papers with their dripping Rorschach until you don't  
understand anything.

5.6.7.

hold your hands out like proof. imagine yourself as a psychiatrist.  
evaluate the emotional functioning of Time.

shout upwards-

WHAT DO YOU SEE

-

as though anything will answer back. as though silence was ever  
acceptable.

**Teens' Choice High School: "The Misunderstood Hood,"  
Vinny Tetiva, Greater Lawrence Technical School**

Have you ever failed a test?

Well I have, and this is mine...

Tupac said it best,

“They got money for war but can’t feed the poor.”

Living in the hood you have to make sure

You lock your door

The Government only cares if you got money

Living in the hood got the sun not as sunny

I struggle for breakfast, lunch and dinner therefore I’m always hungry

Because at the end of the day the ghetto will find a way

So many people are still homeless

People working 60 hours a week and still can't get a bonus

But in the end they say they care

Us kids gotta run away so we don’t have to that pay cab fare

All the urban cities living the nightmare

Everywhere you go there’s drugs right there

Only thing we had was Obama care

Everybody in the hood is still on welfare

Breathe in, and you can smell death in the air

But once again they just don’t care

All the ghettos need rebuilding,

But according to the president,

You ain't a resident unless you own a building

They trying to prevent the violence

But the silence in the streets it's like when my heart beats

You can't hear it but it doesn’t mean you gotta fear it

Nobody will ever have pity on me Vinny  
Or me and my gritty grimy city  
It's hard living in the hood  
Always wishing the bad will turn good  
Worse thing is that I've always been misunderstood  
Could it be because of my childhood  
Since I don't act as if I should  
Everybody thinks the ghetto is all bad  
That none of us kids know how to act  
Every other kid has a deadbeat dad  
This is my opinion not a fact  
They need to give the ghetto a chance  
But they keep everything in silence  
Is it violence or the devils dance  
The news hides everything  
Everybody is always lying  
They don't ever tell us the truth  
So it's still so sad for our youth  
But I guess this is what I gotta go through  
Every generation has the same struggle  
It's like Deja vu.  
I might've failed this test  
But this is the end of the story I will still smile and chuckle  
The streets only know the rest

## HIGH SCHOOL HONORABLE MENTIONS

### **“Fly into the Crimson,” Saadwi Balaji, Andover High School**

Amidst the rain and moist flora; a hike away

A Cedarwood tree lay in the distance

The textured moss peeling off

Dotted with dewdrops and insects of exotic colors

And patches of fungi and flowers encircling the roots

Climb high till all that remains in your vision are —

Diamond rain, emerald leaves, and smoky quartz bark

And there, on an inconspicuous branch

Are perched; crested birds having plumages stained like a fire pit

With shades of a faded midnight

And vividly glowing honey breasts

Near their sheening claws are a beak-crafted collection of

Burnt cayenne twigs, crackly leaves and coagulated mud

A zestful flap of wings and an exchange of bird calls

Look below, and there; you will see

Plumes everywhere

The five feathered fraternity flutter

We have come at a golden time...

Their blush beaks open and close intermittently  
And their kohl-lined eyes twitch periodically  
The mother pushes one forward  
Cajoling, coaxing, and convincing  
It begins...

A gust of wind and a rainbow of leaves  
The cottony clouds make way for the ball of fire  
Abruptly, the air becomes so brittle  
Cautioning that it will snap at any moment  
Turning the affinity's heads

The juvenile's wingspan increases  
Its copper eyes shift to the multi-textured scene  
Its intrepid mind prepares for a hopefully successful takeoff  
Its lustrous feet subsequently fixed inches above, feet above,  
Ready to splash into the hundred prismatic tints laid before it  
And now gliding in the morning splendor scattered with cream  
jasmynes

A resonant honeyed mango gleams and shines at the bird's  
triumph

And it waits...

It waits for the rest's success in the cornerstone of being:

A free flying bird

Into the scarlet fire goes our feathered friend

To go on to make its destiny

And so do his kinship

**“every sunrise is a sunset, somewhere,” Julia Beckwith,  
Phillips Academy Andover**

*after Sand Dunes, Sunrise, Death Valley National Monument by  
Ansel Adams, 1948*

did you know, light doesn't always come from the sun. sometimes,  
rays shine from the antisolar point (the sky-space opposite the  
sun). the negative place has a name, the absence of a  
distinguishing feature its hallmark

did you know, if concentrated light is shot into a stream of water,  
it will not continue forward.

it will follow the path of the water:

bent,

falling,

the Molten, holding the Intangible

(even something that travels at twohundredninetyninemillon,  
sevenhundredninetytwothousand, fourhundredfiftyeight meters  
per second can be

captured / trapped / held)

did you know, it is likely that black holes contain a lot of light – it  
just can't escape

maybe, black holes are the brightest places in the universe

(what is dark matter  
but a place that requires patience?)

light makes sense in the abstract but  
still – i do not know the sunrise.

**“The Universe is expanding, according to my Astronomy textbook,” Julia Beckwith, Phillips Academy Andover**

When I was barely a year old, my father woke up around 2am, buckled me into a crescent shaped car seat, and together we ventured out to the nearest open space (there was a meteor shower, and he wanted to see the star-like structures string streaks across the sky (I would ask him which one it was but right now, he's 6 hours behind, ahead, away (take your pick, time is what you make of it (my father probably thinks he understands time (he thinks he understands a lot of things he doesn't (me, for example— and maybe he does—but still, I can't help but think of a conversation I had the other day (someone told me that everything is always in motion (I don't often think about this, but I guess it is true (I am moving, right now (and the earth is ever-so-slowly moving away from the sun (just as the moon is ever-so-slowly moving away from the earth (just as I am ever-so-slowly moving away from my father (and maybe this is why I am struggling to eloquently thank him for showing me how to look at the sky)))))))))))).

**“The Bringer of War,” Emma Brown, Phillips Academy Andover**

Nighttime falls on silent ears,  
The fading memories of the years,  
For none who float among the stars,

Can cast their shadows long as Mars—  
Who sits upon his iron throne  
And rolls the dice, His will made known.  
The thund'ring clatter in the sky,  
Brings screams of terror as men die,  
The fleeting sounds of battles ring  
Beneath the banner of fallen kings;  
For them a solemn voice doth call:  
“O, He who has declared our thrall,  
Looses our arrows as innocents weep.  
And we, we can do naught but sleep—  
As He who lives, immortal,  
Is He who creates and thrives alone  
On war, sempiternal.”

**“Circle of Light,” David Frykenberg, Andover High School**

When we look into each other's eyes,  
We are two mirrors reflecting each other's infinity  
I'm not sure how love got into the circle  
We didn't create it, it just came  
Like light  
So that we could see into our forever

**“The King of Shadows,” Natalie Good, The Cambridge School of Weston**

How is it that a man born in a time so far from mine  
can pull my heartstrings like a violin?

A man from a time of chamber pots and tobacco,

A time of getting into the theatre for a penny,

A time of a cheering, rowdy audience,

bustling against the stage,

booing or

clapping their hands together in a wild cacophony

How is it that you, a glovemaker’s son,

should be the psychic of storms,

a forest to escape to,

a beloved grandparent whispering stories to me over the bone-  
rattle of night?

How is it that I now sing the songs of a man whose bones have  
been crushed

into pulp,

into dust,

into nothing but nothing but nothing?

Well, Will, for what it’s worth,

I am iambic penta-murdered by your brilliant words

You speak to me, you man of many tongues,  
you duke of double entendre

I say that I am lonely, and you say, "I too have felt this"

I say that I am in love, and you say, "I too have felt this"

I say that I am falling into the feeling that nothing matters, like no  
one understands what I

am made of, like humankind is worthless,

and you...

you

pass me fart jokes

You, sir,

you, knave,

you make my heart beat double quick,

and I can't hold my smile back

or reel in my joy

when I'm sitting and

pouring over your words

I love the chase of it,

the historical backgrounds,

the dictionary dog-earing,

the leaning on my elbows

I feel like an archaeologist at a dig,  
brushing away ancient idioms  
Maybe I'm a necromancer here,  
breathing life into sonnets,  
transforming them through gentle care  
and making them fit any life I choose  
or maybe I'm unlocking a kingdom,  
all mine to inherit

I like to think he had rumbling mountains in his lungs  
or a hornets' nest in his brain  
Thoughts rattling off against his skull,  
words that he couldn't hide behind gated teeth  
I like to imagine him writing furiously,  
trying to release everything inside him  
Less like a butterfly's flight  
and more like throwing stones at everyone who ever doubted him

And, oh, that meter!

I'm sorry, but I can't help fawning over his meter!  
Iambic pentameter is literally the beat of my heart,  
It fits into my ribs, it opens up my lungs,  
Shakespeare, writing not with marble or gold,  
but with a visceral rhythm that everyone knows

by heart

Shakespeare is in your bloodstream and pumping out life

He is not in a nose held high, but in your bones

He is emotional and jeering,

laughing and leering,

sweating and pining and sometimes rhyming,

but always

alive

**“A Study of Spiders,” Natalie Good, The Cambridge School of Weston**

The nightmare of every child.

Spindled legs tickling skin,

weaving tapestries in the

corners of bedroom ceilings.

Many eyed monstrosity,

you move too fast

with legs too thin,

and I feel pinpricks

running up and down my arms

when I see you.

but your body is so fragile,

light enough to walk on water,  
light enough to dangle in the air,  
held only by dewy white thread.

What are you, spider?  
How were you created?  
Did you climb out of the darkness,  
propelled out of caves by toothpick legs?

Were you a girl transformed,  
too proud of your  
silk and loom?

Regardless,  
we encase your body in glass cups,  
seal it in paper,  
and send you scuttling out the back door.

**“In the Event of a Moon Disaster,” Charlotte Guterman,  
Andover High School**

Was there even an evacuation plan or  
did everything run on that American flavor of rocket fuel hope  
Burning up and too soon  
for television broadcast to witness

On a dusty rock without fanfare perhaps  
 they would have breathed until there was no air  
 and they could only remove their helmets to feel the great  
 blankness of stars on their eyelids once  
 and forever or  
 maybe try to swim through the dark,  
 parting the sky with thick useless fingers floating  
 and falling back to the land  
 that will never be theirs.

There are no funerals on the Moon  
 No flags or speeches or processions of Moonmen  
 There are no flowers just static blossoming in stutters  
 There are no graves unless  
 dug by the dead themselves no  
 music just sifting grime  
 that vibrates between planets echoing  
 like a legend that never was.

**“The Forest, A Sonnet,” Rory Haltmaier, Phillips  
 Academy Andover**

As I walk along the dappled path, I  
 trip, submerged. My hair floats in the murk of  
 leaves and light, my lungs absent of air. I  
 watch myself become smaller and smaller

as the trees sprout around me, branches stretching,  
embracing the warm sun. Ripples criss-cross  
my vision as I look up to the fog  
above, my cries suffocated by the  
silence. I feel eyes scratching my back, though  
the musty darkness hides all sight of them.  
I turn, feet floating on air, pine  
needles brushing the soles of my feet as  
I drift along the emerald grove, wary.  
I sink deeper; I don't want to be saved.

**“Slipping Under,” Rory Haltmaier, Phillips Academy  
Andover**

The dragonfly twirls,  
making pirouettes in the thick air,  
a tongue whips,  
slicing through the fog,  
snatching the iridescent morsel mid-flight.  
The slimy creature reels in its catch,  
  
a fisherman like no other,  
it blinks once in gratitude  
then crunches.

Its delicate toes make ripples  
as it hops from lily to log  
to find the perfect spot  
in the center of everything.

A perch  
to see and be unseen

A place  
to bask as two-legged giants  
slink through the reeds,  
one hooks an ankle on prankster cattails,  
tumbling into the water,

sending a cacophony of giggles  
that vibrate through the summer air.

Hérons roll their eyes and  
leap into the pale sky  
as the emerald jumper  
crashes through the mirror  
into the quiet below.

**“I Am From Mom,” Roandy Herrera, Greater Lawrence Technical High School**

I am from a used toy  
 From the broken attic where we lived  
 I am from dirt  
 And roly polly’s  
 I am from brown grass  
 Because the bucket of water is half empty  
 I am from leaky pipes and broken glass  
 From Mom and a Mystery  
 I am from Mom’s hidden tears and fake smiles  
 And from bright eyes and flat feet  
 From black hair and light skin  
 I am from one present on Christmas  
 From white rice and brown rice  
 From Great Great Grandma dying at 112 just two years ago  
 And from Great Grandpa’s street that’s named after him  
 I am from the moments of free food and hand-me-downs and  
 Pride and appreciation for my mother

**“The Way In,” Emily Jackson, Phillips Academy Andover**

Sometimes the way into the world is dangerous.  
 You thought the way in was safe  
 You thought the way in was easy

You thought,  
Sometimes the way into paradise is through a cave  
Through a forest  
Through the depths of the streets  
Underneath the flickering yellow  
Surrounded by blaring sirens  
Wrapped in the chilling wind  
Faced by the wrath of love.

Sometimes the way into the world is wounding,  
Sometimes the way into a heart is through pain.  
Heartache and stabs  
Learning from the  
Mistakes we all make, the ones  
That tear and scratch  
And scratch and scratch and scratch and  
Sometimes the way to the top is to fall to the bottom,  
To fall through that endless abyss  
Leading to nowhere.

Sometimes the way into the world is beauty.  
The way in seems ugly  
It seems dangerous  
It seems wounding

It seems like a battlefield no one wants to enter,  
Dodging spears, with only your body to protect your soul  
Everything pushing you back, the odds are against you  
The way into the world seems  
Brutal.

But sometimes, the way into the world is simple  
The way in is safe  
The way in is easy, Sometimes  
It only takes a simple step,  
One action, one connection  
One person.

**“Drugs,” Elissa Lonie, Andover High School**

Dancing on the edge  
With fire moving  
Across the bottoms of our feet  
But we still don't feel anything

So we jump two feet forward  
Leaning over into unsafe spaces  
Seek another thrill  
Another time where we'll grip the edge of seats  
Overcome with the feeling of  
Two second of adrenaline to satisfy

And addiction stronger than unbreakable bonds

Because when the days come to a close

And the night begins

The unspeakable stories

Of what danced across our skin

And the presence placed before our eyes

The cycle continues to flow and change

With new versions of the same thrills

Two second adrenaline rush

That attempts to satisfy the needs

But a sweet elixir

That no one dared to touch

Labeled happiness and promised all too much

One taste and you'd never want anything else they'd say

Whispering myths of happy endings

That the cure worked

With the cheap thrills beginning to become boring

One day they'd try it

And find the stories were true

So everyday from then on

They'd fight for something that was hard to reach but always worth it

Because the need for a two second adrenaline rush was gone

And the world of bliss began

**“The Refugee,” Therese Pelletier, Phillips Academy  
Andover**

Your nights are restless. The days you keep still. The sounds surround you, the vibrations consume you, the stench of death lurks in every inch of air you breathe.

You stay in your makeshift bunker underground and listen to the rhythmic shots of the guns which fire around you day and night. You gave up on counting weeks ago, the time you have spent imprisoned in these walls.

Fear pulses through your veins to the rhythm of your heartbeat. A heartbeat you don't take for granted, a heartbeat so many have lost, a heartbeat you don't know how much longer you will get to keep.

The days are hot, sweat builds up in your pores and leaks out as plentifully as the tears from your eyes. Your hunger builds with every day, your thirst along with it. The rations you have are running out as well as your time.

The world outside is far from safe, your chances for survival are smaller than the bunker you live in. Hope only carries you so far, desperation a little farther, survival just one last bit more.

You haven't seen the light of day since you can remember, nor the outside world or the threats and terrors that lie within it.

Your food and water are finished, your body is weak. You lack rest, energy, and an emotional fight to keep you alive. All you are left with is your imagination to attempt and remember the parts of life where you once had peace in a world without so much hatred.

**“Growing up, Lawtown,” Kaylee Sostre, Greater Lawrence Technical High School**

ladies and genalmen, let me tell you what it's like growing up in Lawrence better known as "Lawtown"

in this hood someone will say your name

i hear my name as though it's said in vain, creating pain, making a flame

creating that flame means to work on your game

Lawtown

you got your "gangstas" and thugs

all want to grind

get diamond chains and gold designs

but if your not on that grind then you're committing crimes

Lawtown

most work on grind by making words rhyme

now i'm not here to kill a trend

resurrect any man from the dead

nor am i here to pretend

Lawtown

now just because it rhymes doesn't mean your going to shine

i'm not here to hate or debate so i'm going to participate

Lawtown

some call me Kay

others, Lee

most just know me to be Kaylee

but for those who don't know me in the town i'm "a yo shorty,  
what it do"

Lawtown

some men barely gentlemen hurting females

some females playing games with the males

Lawtown

now i know i might be getting a bit intense

i dont expect you all to keep up like a race

but i like my rhythm at a fast pace

Lawtown

kids in the hood

raising them in a city to be misunderstood

kids with talent, dreams, and goals

but don't let them fool you

some just want gold

Lawtown

young girl raised without a father  
chasing her dreams trying to go farther and farther

Lawtown

look at me now

recognize i am that prize

i've been to new york for art awards

but lets see how far this flow of a poet will take me

i'm no rapper

but let me tell you i'm surrounded by trappers

Lawtown

the city might not be such a bad thing

but i'm trying to make it out

i got goal to reach so those i love can preach in peace

Lawtown

there's more to this story

some come with glory others are a bit gory

but once i fly i soar

i refuse to stop until i'm caught

Lawtown

my name is kaylee

you can call me Kay or Lee

but mock my words

i'm 5 foot 4

but i will soar