

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
13th 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!

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MIDDLE SCHOOL WINNING POEMS

1st 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.

**2nd 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

2nd 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.

**3rd 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
crippingly 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 is 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,
Guilt, 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

1st 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.

2nd 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