

Memorial Hall Library's



**10th Annual Teen
Poetry Contest
Award Winning Poems**



May 2014

Sponsored by the Friends of Memorial Hall Library

Memorial Hall Library 2 North Main Street Andover, MA 01810

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Memorial Hall Library's 10th Annual Teen Poetry Contest Award Winning Poems

Selected by Gayle C. Heney, North Andover's Former 2-Term Poet Laureate

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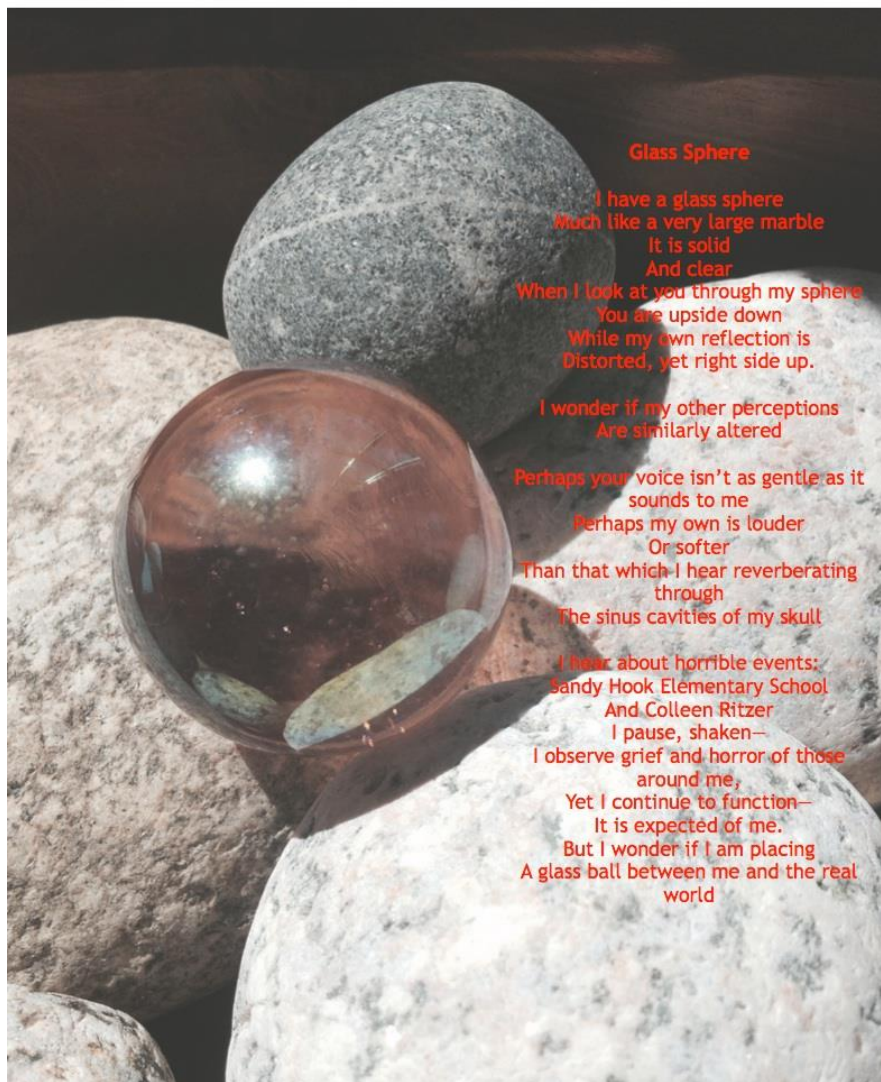
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Middle School Top Honors

1st Place

“Glass Sphere” by David Frykenberg, Doherty, Grade 8



2nd Place

“Sunrise” by Julia Mazzuchi, Wood Hill, Grade 7

Stone gray clouds masked the sunlight

So only a few ambitious rays made it through

But this only made the light

Seem more electric
 Like hot strings of steel wool
 Covered in dancing sparks
 Which filled the morning sky

3rd Place
“Antigone” by Natalie Good, Doherty, Grade 7

Darkness descends as Polyneices is slain
 The exiled king’s corpse lying on the Theban plain
 The decree is sent out, and order to obey
 Outside the walls of Thebes the traitor must stay
 “His actions against his people; betrayal! Deceit!
 Determine his punishment: to be left from head to feet
 To hungry dogs, vultures, and carrion birds,”
 These are the new ruler’s irreverent words

“No man may touch him, or bless him, or care,”
 The answer from the public is a frightened stare
 The sentence for anyone who marks him with love
 Is a prison of stone far from all heaven’s doves
 All the souls in the crowd are unable to think
 Except Antigone, whose actions will soon be immortal in ink

A plan is what her cunning mind is weaving
 Amidst her heart’s heavy grieving
 for Polyneices outside the wall: her own brother
 Abandoned, shamed unlike any other
 She makes certain the plan for the deceased;
 To carry out for her dear brother’s peace

She walks across the sand at dawn
 Although she in her hushed movement is a fawn,
 She is not a wide-eyed creature overtaken by fears
 Past the slumbering sentries, his body she nears
 Tiptoeing to Polyneices, she stops and cries
 Sobbing waterfalls where her brother lies
 She digs her fingernails into the whispering dust
 And over his corpse, sand and ritual wine are thrust

When dragged to the king, she confesses her guilt

Her life is a flower condemned to wilt
 She is locked in a chamber and hidden from lights
 She pleases the gods but is stripped of her rights
 Her fiancé laments, her poor sister does grieve
 As they and the crowd see Antigone leave

She can't wait for shadowy death to take her
 Alone in the stinging dark of a suffocating chamber
 The action is final: her own course she decides
 Away to the shadowy realm where Polyneices resides
 With a turning, twisting rope she hoists up her head

She'll stand next to her brother in the valley of the dead

Middle School Teen Choice (and Honorable Mention)

“Poem for Sadness” by Tomas Madison Morse, Wood Hill, Grade 7

The Clouds Wavered,
 Bringing a Grave Darkness.
 The Green Plants,
 Once Thriving,
 Turned Gray and withered
 The Waves,
 They Roared.
 The Wind,
 They Played Loud Music.

Throughout All This Madness
 a Girl.
 Tall, But Delicate,
 Her Dark Black Hair
 Contrasted Her Old Gray Dress.
 Her Face Was Tired and Stressed in a
 “I used to be beautiful way,”
 Her feet were small,
 Covered In The Ashes Of Her House.
 The Sleeves Of Her Dress,
 Torn and Ripped,
 Until The Wind Pulled Them Away.
 Suddenly a Tear,
 Followed by Another,
 Then Another.

She Was Crying,
She Knew Her Fate.

Middle School Honorable Mentions

“Decisions” by Abhi Agarwal, Wood Hill , Grade 7

Why are you in this world?
It’s because of decisions,
Every little decision counts,
Towards something,
Big or small.

Why did you look to the left?
Why did you wear that today?
Why are you sitting in that seat?
Maybe it’s faith,
Acting in its twisted ways.

You probably wouldn’t be born,
If the stars didn’t align,
How did your parents meet?
Because maybe they turned left at the intersection,
What would happen,
If they had turned right?

“Black Room” by Abhi Agarwal, Wood Hill, Grade 7

Hidden in the depths of your mind,
Is the black room,
The room of your dark side
A room you have created,
Something you cannot destroy.

The walls of the black room are as black as tar,
With checkers of blood red,
A stained hardwood floor,
And a large grand piano,
Centered in the room.

One might think nothing lives in the room,
But something does,

It's a small, red devil,
One that represents your sins,
Smiling cynically at you.

Do not trust this man,
Even with his well-crafted smiles,
But one day when your guard is down,
It will overtake you,
And you will fall to darkness.

How do you get to this room?
That's not a question I can answer,
Everyone had their own way of entering
But it's not through a door.

“My Nana” by Natalie Caffrey, Wood Hill, Grade 7

My Nana slow but graceful,
Shuffling in her blingy jumpsuits,
With her short, blond hair,
And her shiny, pink nail polish.

With her house full of modern furniture,
Her effort to still be young,
And the smell of sautéed onions,
From the kitchen,
As I walk through the front door.

Her soft humming to Frank Sinatra,
As she wraps her arms around me,
Giving a kiss that sucks the air out of my ear.

With her positive attitude,
And her smile of white teeth,
And purple gums.

Her white Sketcher sneakers,
And the confused look,
When she's working with technology,
And how she sits down to rest,
In the same brown chair every time.

“When I was Young” by Megan Chen, Wood Hill, Grade 7

When I was young in China,
 Bright light twinkled,
 Yellow taxis rushed by,
 And vendors yelled, selling their noodle soup and skewered beef.
 Buses honked,
 Food cooked,
 And money passed hands freely.
 I lingered with cousins,
 Begging parents for toys.
 I was soon holding a blue umbrella in one hand,
 And a parent’s hand in another

When I was young in China,
 Places were visited,
 Relatives met,
 Reunions were joyful,
 And full of food and greetings.
 And compliments were paid,
 And conversations were held.
 The smell of food was in the air,
 And the sound of happiness was everywhere.
 Good-byes were bittersweet.
 Tears were cried,
 And hugs exchanged.

“The Slitherer” by Megan Chen, Wood Hill, Grade 7

He slips through the reeds,
 His tail sliding from side to side.
 Gleaming eyes track the
 Unwary prey.
 He slips forward,
 To and fro.
 The prey hops forward,
 Light glinting in its
 Beady eyes.
 A pretty flower catches it’s
 Innocent eye,
 And its fate is sealed.

The predator slides forward,
 And the prey sniffs hopefully.
 A blur of white,
 And now there is only
 One.

“The Average Bayou” by Kevin Choi, Wood Hill, Grade 7

The smooth muck that
 Floated atop the murky water
 Vibrated as the fisherman’s
 Fly contacted

The damp reed grass
 Followed the flow of the slight breeze
 As the houseboat swayed
 The rusty grill engaged in the motion and
 Started a faint creaking noise

The sun boiled the thick
 Puffed out
 Neck of Billy J
 He patiently chewed tobacco
 While watching his still rod

A movement, far away
 Took Billy J’s focus
 The rod ripped out of his hand
 He hesitated
 Then strained in anger

“The Place of No Going Back” by Declan Croston, Wood Hill, Grade 7

I am going to the place of no going back
 Away from the nagging voices
 That attack my mind
 Away from the bullies
 That flank my brain
 Blasting me with insults
 I am going to the place of no going back

I am going to the place of no going back
 Letting myself melt
 Into the cold metal
 Letting the damp dirt
 Consume me
 I am never going back

“The Battle” by Dominique Devani, Wood Hill, Grade 7

People think it’s alright
 All they see is what I show them
 Yet what I show them
 Is not the truth
 The truth is
 I’m battling
 Not with a distant enemy
 With a much closer one
 Myself
 Everyday
 Back and forth
 The battle continues
 There can be no winner though
 In a battle with yourself

“You (After Billy Collins)” by Sean Diehl, Wood Hill, Grade 7

You are the fresh rhubarb pie
 Your sweet aroma wafting through the cottage
 You are the bright yellow daffodils
 And the reluctant sunlight
 Shining at twilight

You are also the golden glow of a comforting nightlight
 And the carefree sound of an acoustic guitar
 A quick look in the mirror will show you that
 You are the soft summer breeze

However, you probably aren't the smell of burning firewood
 Or the smell of sweet lilacs

Or even the gooseberry jam
That I spread on my biscuits

I am the swaying birch tree
Even your favorite hardcover story
As well as the scarf
That keeps you warm

If you try extremely hard
You could be my fuzzy sweater
Or my small black comb
That I take when I travel
But you will always be you

“Caught in the Moment” by Boston Emmanuel, Wood Hill, Grade 7

Under pressure
Our minds don't cooperate
Logic and commonsense don't exist
Sweat races down my face
I cannot look them in the eyes
I told a lie

My brain scolds me
My legs begin to quiver
Thoughts disorient my mind
My face is pale
Thinking the truth would be worse
Than telling a lie

I pace back and forth
Trying to hide the guilt
I need to get my story straight
Ones slip up
Then you would know
I got tangled in my lie

“Remembering” by Olivia Gillman, Wood Hill, Grade 7

I would lean my head
Against the cold window
And watch the little droplets of rain
Race each other to the bottom.
I would look at the broiling clouds
And feel protected
Wrapped in a maroon blanket.
Lightning would pierce the sky
Followed by the loud rumbling of thunder.
I would jump back,
Feeling safe no more.

Now,
I still lean my head
Against the window
But it is a different one.
I still watch the raindrops
Race each other to the bottom.
I still look at the broiling clouds
Although not as much is visible
Over the grown trees.
Now I have a knit, cream blanket
Draped over my shoulders
Not a maroon one.
And if lightning pierces the sky,
If the once terrifying thunder fills the air,
I smile.
Not because I like it,
Although I do,
But because I remember.

“I am a Witch” by Emma Gilmartin, Wood Hill, Grade 7

I am a witch
Battling my own shadow
Unsure of who I am
And who I want to be
Nightmares that seem to be coming true
And happiness that seems to be drifting away

I am a witch
 Afraid of my own shadow
 Lost in the darkness
 Trapped in my body
 Losing faith
 Losing the battle

I am a witch
 Questioning my presence
 And impact
 Lost in a battle with myself
 With no winner
 Feeling pressure and defeat

I am a witch
 Searching for answers
 Wondering who I am
 an unsolved mystery
 Am I a witch?

“Reading is Time Vortex” by Cassia Gonsalves, Homeschool, Grade 6

A book is a time vortex,
 A net for adventure.
 Whoosh! You fall in!
 In many places you will venture.
 As amazing as parachuting,
 As lovely as a dream,
 Stuck to it like glue,
 Makes you laugh, cry, and scream.
 The possible is impossible,
 And the impossible is possible.

“Hippo” by Kate Gregory, Doherty, Grade 8

He may seem like
 A ratty old
 Stuffed animal
 Hippopotamus,

But to me,
He is so much more.

He is the stuffed animal
My aunt gave me
About two months
Before my first birthday.
A thirteen year old
Hippopotamus stuffed animal.

He is the friend
Who always was
With me when
I went to sleep.

In a moving, shifting world,
He stayed constant.

He and I
Grew older together,
And I could
Never bring myself
To condemn him
To life on a shelf.

Together we stayed,

Together we are now.

“Ode to Bacon” by Kate Gregory, Doherty, Grade 8

You sizzle in your greasy fat,
Popping and snapping,
My ideal morning is with you,
A delicious treat.

Your salty scent wafts
Through the whole house.
It wakes me up on weekend mornings,
Your scent urging me out of bed.
Even the next day,
I still smell you in the air.

Your smoky flavor coats my tongue
 As I take a bite of your crunchiness,
 Crunchy in all places
 Except the tender fat.

One morning with you
 Is like Heaven in the form
 Of a burnt-edged piece
 Of fatty pig.

They say that you will kill me,
 But I don't care.
 Who can resist you?

My stomach and tongue
 Would rebel if
 I were to ever
 Stop eating you

“Ode to Striped Bass” by Philip LeBlanc, Doherty, Grade 8

O, striped bass, basking in the sun's rays.
 You strike terror into the hearts of other fish.

Only a few fishermen try to haul you from the depths of the ocean.
 The bait hugs the end of the hook, trying to be invisible to you.
 You smell its fear as you move in for your dinner.

The fisherman saunters to his chair, as he feels a tug on his pole.
 He snaps the bail on his rod, and starts to reel the monster in.
 You flail your tail relentlessly, but to no avail.
 You see all the small fish laughing at you as you are being pulled to your death.
 Your shimmery scales flash as you break the surface.

You think to yourself, this is the end.

The fisherman lets up for a second and you take this opportunity to escape.
 But his fishing net scoops you up from the salty seawater.
 You struggle as the hook is removed from your lip.
 He places you on a scale, you're seventy-five pounds.

You are thrown into an icebox.
 The lid closes as you drift into a deep sleep,

Your watery wonderful world goes black.
 You are brought to the fish market and sold.
 The next day you are on a dish at a five star restaurant.

“Old Days” by Karishma Mistry, Wood Hill, Grade 7

Back in the old days
 When we were young and free
 Dancing through fields of gold
 In our fancy clothes

Stopping to say hello to friends and foe
 Skipping down the street
 We dreamt of what was to come
 Of marriages and children
 Of goals and parties

Now it's all work
 Months filled with the same boring routine
 Eat
 Sleep
 Work
 The same route
 The same path everyday

Now we dream
 Dream of what's happened
 Of the dresses and fields
 Of our marriage and loves
 Longing to go back

“Smile” by Karishma Mistry, Wood Hill, Grade 7

Smile *verb* \ 'smī(-ə)\ :
 to make the corners of your mouth turn up in an expression that shows happiness, amusement,
 pleasure, affection, etc.

Smile
 The easiest thing to do when you're
 Hurt

Or angry
 When you're
 Happy
 Or sad
 When you're
 Embarrassed
 Or confused
 An everyday mask
 We plaster upon our faces
 When you are
 Depressed
 Or left out
 When you're
 Stressed
 Or ill
 When you can't think
 Of what else to do

“Slaves” by Karishma Mistry, Wood Hill, Grade 7

Before nothing mattered
 We could do whatever we wanted as long as our work was
 Done
 That's what I miss the most
 Freedom

It fell apart
 Into dust and smoke
 Crumbled before our very eyes
 When they came
 With their chains and whips
 And guns

We marched on together but not by
 Choice
 Our feet and hands bound
 Together
 Taken onto a ship
 Shoved
 Below the deck

Now we work all day long
 Without a break
 No fun allowed
 Sweating in the sun
 Trapped

“I’m a Strange One” by Osyris Mohika, Wood Hill, Grade 7

Cautiously I walk the halls
 Will they break the walls I have built?
 I stroke my chiseled features
 My short black hair
 The scarred knees
 My pale skin covers
 The darkness inside
 I sit in dark corners
 While the harsh voices talk in my head
 My loneliness and sadness sits and boils inside of me
 Being alone doesn’t bother me
 It gives me joy
 My raggedy black clothes sit on my body
 The color black adores me
 Some outsiders say they play sports
 My hobby is witchcraft
 I may not be normal
 But I am powerful

“Ode to Mango” by Aghijeet Sambangi, Doherty, Grade 8

Seeking the treasures underneath your thin lime green skin,
 I sink my teeth into your sweet summer yellow flesh.
 Melting like butter
 but softly succulent,
 you rejoice in the depths of my mouth.
 The cold juices swirl
 like mixed memories
 reminding me of
 the streets of India
 in the burning sun.

Oh Mango,
you come as a savior to
rescue my throat from
parched pain.
My tongue dances to the wild music
of your silky flavors
as I submerge under the vast ocean
of nostalgia and memory,
ultimate happiness
and freedom.

“Drawing” by Kristen Stark, Doherty, Grade 8

I sit myself down calmly
in my hand I'm prepared
with a slender pencil.
The thin, wooden stick
drags itself towards the paper
and right in that second
it becomes a psychic.
dancing and twirling gracefully
gliding across the page with ease
scuffing the paper with its tip.
My thoughts are portrayed
in the pencil's dance,
flowing from my head
to the tips of my fingers
I hunch over to concentrate
on the seemingly random pattern
I watch as the intricate threads of my mind unfold
and as each sweep of the pencil slows
as though with each stroke it grows weary
and finally it stops
the yellow-coated mind reader has finished.

“Mouse in the House” by Lexie Trant, Wood Hill, Grade 7

It scampered onto the wing chair
Its eyes were frantic and wild
A cheerio was in its tiny hand
Bringing it to its mouth

It stood up tall on the chair’s arm
Staring out confused
It then jumped down and ran
Mom finally noticed it

She grabbed a broom
And jumped on a chair
We called the exterminator

The mouse found the peanut butter
That was left in a paper box
For the mouse to eat and get stuck in
It did

The exterminator came back hours later
He took the trap the mouse was in
And brought over a big red bucket of water

He took the mouse out of a trap
Then dropped it in the bucket of water
It drowned

I felt bad
It wasn’t a bad mouse

“7 Ways of Looking at Silence” by Evie Wybenga, Doherty, Grade 8

1
I watch the trees
being pummeled by the wind outside
in eerie silence.

2
My thoughts are never silent,

Even when alone
in the middle of the night
waiting for sleep.

3

Standing in front of the crowd,
Her powerful melody
soared on the back
of the silence
underneath her.

4

I felt a little nervous to talk.
He didn't seem to mind the silence,
Though I knew
words
were begging to jump off
both of our tongues.

5

The silence builds up
in layers.
So delicate, a pin dropping
could shatter it all.

6

She can't bring herself to speak.
She just hopes
that they're listening to her silence.

7

With vacancy in his eyes,
no words were necessary.

His silence was all I needed to hear.

“The Cape House” by Grace Zhang, Wood Hill, Grade 7

In the house that I rented on the cape,
I would always pick the same room
Baby blue walls and candles that smelled
Like peppermint mocha
Looking through the old birch dressers
Hoping someone had left something behind

Chugging down bottles of
 Snapple Raspberry Iced Tea
 Having movie nights on Saturday
 With the girls next door
 Who seemed to always wear pink

In the house that I rented on the cape
 My favorite time was evening
 Sitting on the old chipped back porch
 Hoping that maybe tomorrow
 I might surf the big wave

Crying when there wasn't any strawberry ice cream left
 Throwing the bowl on the table
 Stomping upstairs
 And back to bed

In the house that I rented on the cape
 I begged for a dog everyday
 One that could jump in the water with me
 And hold up their head
 Even when the big waves crashed over
 Sweeping us under
 Onto the cold sandy ocean floor

I tip-toed into my parents' room at night
 The wood floor creaking beneath
 I always said I had a nightmare
 But never really did
 Just wanted a warm hug
 And lemonade

“Litany” by Grace Zhang, Wood Hill, Grade 7

You are a sugar filled cupcake
 The soft warm blanket
 Fresh out of the dryer
 The big blue umbrella on a rainy day
 And the twenty dollar bill in the parking lot
 Left for someone to find

The new star
Shining just for me
And the smooth peanut butter on toast
You are the bird that eats bread
From my outstretched hand
Whenever I go outside

You are the alarm
That forgot to go off
On the morning of the day of a test
The bright stain on a new expensive sweater
Syrup that stuck to my fingertips
And the empty soap bottle by the sink

The crumb on the white cloth table
The one dirty pencil
That makes the entire case
Fill with gray

You may be
The best winter coat
Or the perfect wedding dress
But mostly the naughty sand
That sneaked under my bathing suit
And the stubborn sunburn on my nose
That won't turn into a tan

I will always be
The perfect alarm
And the old star that shines
For everyone
The sweet scent of roses and peonies
And the fuzzy socks tucked into your boots
On a chilly day
But you'll always be the sugar filled cupcake
Even if you cause people's pant size
To get larger

High School Top Honors

1st Place

“Capable Women” by Caroline Murtagh, Andover High, Grade 11

Equality is crooked like a child’s block tower, tumbling down at the will of your finger Or the whistle of your breath. You’ve given us permission to fall, So we lay scrambled as broken eggshells. But we are not just penny candy, Artificial and sickly sweet as the media portrays us, Disintegrating against the touch of your lips. And we are not just mascara and heels Or tanned legs, sprouting as bean shoots from magazines Or exotic birds, squawking for your attention in a zoo. We are certainly not just housewives, Drowning in baby formula and cooking oil, Waiting for your arms at the end of the day To wrap us up as swaddled newborns. And we are not specks of dust, Trapped within the four walls of home, content with floating in the light rays that penetrate the prison windows. No, we are ears, tired of listening And mouths, cramped into oppressed lines And hands, callused from grasping independence Even as it trickles like sand through our fingers. We are as capable as you.

2nd Place

“hope” by Julia Beckwith, Phillips Academy, Grade 9

i’m starting to hate hope.
the way it creeps into my head, my heart
disguised as brightly colored promises
drugging my brain
filling the chasm of impossibility
and i’ve come to learn
that the bridges hope weaves
tend to shatter
when i’m halfway across

3rd Place

“Inhale, Exhale...” by Hope Flynn, Andover High, Grade 11

And it's been too long
Somewhere along the twisting, contorting, confining, conforming
I lost that internal rhythm that was truly mine
That hopeful march, the steady essence

It shattered
 And as a gear breaks the system takes and before long the machine shakes
 And it will knell and call
 It's scraped, raw metal shriek is muffled by cold hands
 A rolling mass of soothing, numbing touches
 Returning its pining wails
 Her name is a pallid reference in blate modern tongues
 Syllables unpronounceable, the mouth cannot reach around
 Save for the desperate, despondent calls
 A call that wrenches the heart
 Rasps the ears
 And bites the soul the same
 It is an ancient pull, shamed and lost in smog
 She bears the burden of the stull
 Chipped, fallen asunder, struggling
 To be the stuffed papers, empty and promising
 Pushing apart the covers of a book
 Until the ringing
 Ah, yes
 That abrasive howl, wrenched from the wretchèd
 She laughed and leapt- released her hold
 And as a gear breaks the system takes and before long
 The gap was sealed
 And she has knelled and called
 And I will cry and cry

High School Teen Choice (and Honorable Mention)

“Talk Too Much” by Jaedlyn Perez, Greater Lawrence Technical High School, Grade 12

Talking is so popular nowadays
 It should have a price
 for each word spoken
 People feed off of stories
 and personal accounts
 They like to twist them into
 their own mess
 Haven't you ever noticed
 the happiest ones talk less?
 Sometimes, that doesn't even last long
 because they listen to the ones talking
 and start doing it themselves
 The integrity they held

has disappeared
 Their biggest fear is
 being alone with no one to hear
 their miseries
 That's why they mess with people mentally
 Their mentality is nowhere near sanity
 Don't let them get to you
 Keep hold of your voice
 Technically, it's your choice
 I can't tell you what to do
 but they can't either
 Go with your heart
 Follow what you believe is true
 Their influence should have no effect
 People talking has no benefits
 They ruin relationships
 They start rumors
 They kill friendships
 They destroy you
 Words hurt
 but don't let them break you
 Your life is not worth
 their pathetic lies
 We were created with love
 Try not to die without it
 If anything, understand this
 People talk and
 that won't stop
 Do yourself a favor
 and don't let them stop you
 from rising to the top

High School Honorable Mention Awards

“Encaged Liberty” by Angell, Grade 12

“Endless opportunities! Riches to caress!”
 That's what they said was the U.S. of A.
 Caught in intense suspense, I commence to dispense my deep desires and thoughts
 That my children would have better tomorrows here
 Because all I have is sorrows here
 Distressed by stress, I attempt to suppress

Tears that can no longer follow, ya hear?
 Are you hearing me? Well I don't need you to hear, I need you to listen
 This is the U.S. of A?!
 Yet, I never get paid like all the rest
 Twenty plus years, I should be neck / deep in treasure chests

Investors and whores intertwined with political offices
 Harvesting disasters destroying a history, economy, and a hella lot more than just a life
 Everyday is a daily strife
 Finna feeling I drove a knife in my common sense
 Screw the damn white picket fence
 I honestly thought the grass was greener
 Stupid demeanor leaving mi quisqueya, la bella
 I'm gonna need a tailor
 For all the innumerable holes this "free country" shot in my dreams
 Guessing it wasn't enough shooting down innocent Iraqis
 Guessing it wasn't sufficient to discriminate me
 For not understanding a language you taught me poorly purposely
 I ... needtobreathe
 My children seek to live in this "land of the free"

I, the child, reside in an underprivileged community: Lawrence
 A place of few places in this nation that still fights for justice and equality
 Maybe someday my sisters and I will soar high like my mother's shot dreams
 Maybe like an eagle, maybe like a jet
 Maybe in our futures lies a time where we won't be drowning in debt
 For confiscated land by a lying government / claiming they are the most powerful in this world
 Enough of the goddamn abuse, assignment is past due
 I'm breaking free of this swirl of detriment
 Words interlocked by rhythmic patterns are melting the chains on my mentality
 I wasn't born in this, the immigrant city, but I will defend it for it is great despite the
 commentary
 True liberty in life, in this land, might never be transpired
 What some didn't realize, however, is that through poetry, my liberty has already been acquired.

"Time" by Tony Aracena, Greater Lawrence Technical High School, Grade 10

It has come; we must quarrel not
 The disguise we bear disgusts it so
 Our soul and conscience lay in harmony
 For the hour of time arrives hear peacefully
 Like an alien of sorts, a creature of dreams,
 Fantasy come real, and all in between
 Let's stand here not, for minutes bid deepest

A sorrow of excitement, a silence full of sound
 And yet, why can I, with boldness of certainty
 See the road of which gullible blinds me so
 A mystery, hallucinations before my body
 Puzzles me, to ask, how great sane has left me
 And if by the common moment
 Should it return?
 My mind is too drunk, too weak it's so strong
 The vision of my mind now roam my eyes
 My knowledge of this has vanished completely
 Like ash in the air, or dust enlargement
 I see it not, it's fast before me
 Its presence at its most agile
 One would think it another
 As a stroke or beam, its silence so loud
 That hearing chills my body

The presence of its eternal being
 The life it brings forth
 It shows its many forms
 In sizes differing from each one
 Its spineless, skinless, tangible skin
 A magic greater than any seen
 The power it wields, its gold composure
 It's far greater than anything my power can control
 Far intense than the sun itself
 A legacy written in the books of knowledge,
 A story waiting to be spoken,
 A language to be interpreted,
 Once desolate, now isolate
 A ruin waiting to be discovered
 A legend, a prophecy, a forecast of events
 Events that roam are minds as questions and theories,
 Taking the form of evidence, words, diagrams, and thoughts.

“My Realization” by Danya Baron, Grade 9

Some days, when the sun is hiding and the clouds are roaring, I think to myself, Was that supposed to happen? Was it planned? My thoughts drown me into a cave of emptiness Other days, when the sun is booming and the clouds tremble from fear, I think to myself, I don't think that was supposed to happen, and I don't think it was planned My thoughts swirl in my head, creating a circle When I finally finish my circle I realize, That the only thing constant is change

“Souvenir of Winter” by Connor Batsimm, Andover High, Grade 12

Two short days,
two postage stamp squares on a Hallmark calendar
struck through with a blue sharpie
and forgotten in favor of to do lists and writing prompts.

Her face was a tally mark
etched into a brick on a cemetery wall,
where lazy straw sprouts from mortar cracks,
wilted under the weight of frozen dew.

The movie theater was lined with granola bar wrappers
and plastic drinking straws:
the backdrop of a conversation
filled with too many uhms and semicolons.

Her lips tasted like strawberries, not quite ripe,
hastily plucked from a supermarket shelf.
that day, all produce was on sale.

On the third day, the wind shifted
and her face hardened into asphalt,
while mine melted like an icicle in July.

Now there is just another X on a January square:
a souvenir of winter.

“Living in a World of Perfection” by Connie Cung, Andover High, Grade 11

Surrounded
 By those who are smarter
 By those who are prettier
 By those who are better

I stand in the background
 Enduring their light
 That radiates off them
 That attracts people like me
 That blinds me

Where is my light?
 Where is my voice?
 Who am I really?
 Am I as caring as they say I am?
 Am I as smart as they say I am?
 Am I as kind as they say I am?

The answer: I don't know

They say:
 Life is about finding yourself'
 But how can I find myself
 When I don't know where to start

“Would you” by Connie Cung, Andover High, Grade 11

If you had the power to change who you are
 An opportunity to be someone different
 Abandon those who care for you
 Who like you the way you are
 Would you

If you had the power to reverse time
 Return to a time in your life
 Filled with imaginary rainbows and butterflies
 To live in the past
 And never move forward
 Would you

If you had to power to change your fate
 To alter your life
 Prevent and prolong your death

To artificially pick and choose what would happen
 Would you

If you had the power to be immortal
 To live forever to the end of time
 To never worry about death
 As others finish their lives
 Would you

To reverse time
 To change one's fate
 To live forever
 To do and be someone extraordinary
 But where there is power
 There are repercussions
 Unknown until it is too late
 Unknown until you have lost something
 Unknown until it is pointed out

A great power
 For you to possess
 For you to take
 Would you

“The Astrologist’s Nightmare” by Hope Flynn, Andover High, Grade 11

I saw it a few days ago
 I chanced a glance into the void
 The place in which all emotions fall and seclude themselves
 The place where there are no stars and there is nothing but loud space
 She'd just tore away from me
 A small tear in the muslin
 But she pulled and pulled
 Until the void was exposed in my shredded star chart
 That subtle darkness in the undertones undulating thickly
 Turbulent waves beneath the glorified surface thinness
 And behind the closed door it-
 It was just a second really
 And the hopeless scientist behind me
 The dark and big and pragmatic and meek
 He didn't see
 But he knew what she had
 And he wanted it back
 And again
 She left us frayed

In another winter
 Before I could look to the skies and find meaning
 When our world was lit only by the fires of forthcoming fears and futile flickers
 What clouded the far-off pinpricks, the soft pinching of reality knocking at my door?
 It was her straight-edge fragility
 And her straight-edge solution
 Now her world is lit by a different kind of fire
 A fire that numbs
 So she said
 A fire that heals
 So she claims
 A flickering flame that destroys every membrane of my being
 And binds my hands to my feet
 And shoots wildly across the sky
 So I cry
 And I weep
 And I, a universe of atoms
 feel like a lost atom in her universe
 I safely encased in my crinkled paper, but
 Hot holes slowly ate their way through

No maps or constellations face any competition before her
 But all she sees is a world of comets and fire
 My short fuse is wilted
 So she unzips her skin with a zippo
 And she melts time
 And she runs across my horizon
 Bright, beautiful, blazing
 She is forever above my hands
 Her path unseen and unforeseeable
 The spectators daydream
 The astrologists' nightmare

“Sonnet Emmanuel” by Hope Flynn, Andover High, Grade 11

Emmanuel the umbrous lion crawls
 ‘Twixt filth and brush and charring inky skies
 Rippling like the sea of men, with all
 Brute and fire the vassal of the mind
 The temptress of the shadow often bids
 Embrace so cold scars shan’t just be repressed
 But senses drawn in vials out from skin

So skin can drop its vie and fall to rest
 But not *his* pelt is that he lets decay
 In temptress dance and corner-forfeit songs
 So let no muscle ever stop in sway
 And grace woven thorns a thought of moral wrongs
 So long shall eyes be shut and bones be chewed
 He'll smear his name with blood he won for you.

“Where I’m From” by Julissa Fernandez, Greater Lawrence Technical High School, Grade 11

I am from Maggie and David,
 From the sparkles in their eyes,
 From their smiles and dreams,
 I am from their wanting and despites.

I am from the Barbie dolls and hot wheels,
 From hopscotch, basketball, and packman,
 From watching T.V., playing tag, dominoes, cards,
 Taking pictures and playing dolls.

I am from the Michael Jackson songs, Paula Abdul, Bee-gees, and some others,
 From “Hey Arnold”, ”Tom and Jerry”, and Bill Cosby.
 I am from the mouth watering candies,
 Like Bazooka Bubble Gum, Lollipops, Hard Candies,
 From Snickers, Twix, Kit-Kats, Reeses, and Alf the show.

I am from Don Quixote de la Mancha,
 From wanting to be a lawyer and a nurse,
 To help others in need.

I am from the stars in the sky,
 From the sun that shines every morning.
 I am from the rainbow that comes and goes,
 From the cow that jumps over the moon,
 From the joy and laughter of children.

I am from cotton and silk,
 From little dust balls,
 That are behind your couch or under your bed.
 I am from pages that you read in a book,
 From the air you breath.

(Be careful, don't choke on me!)

I am from the essays and poems you write,
From sports and schools,
From your problems to solutions.

I am from the brains cells in your brain,
From the blood that flows through your body,
From life itself.
I am from you, Maggie and David.

**“In Which I was Confused about the Color of the Sky” by Claire Glover,
Phillips Academy, Grade 10**

because the clouds are pink and periwinkle
and i have never felt this way
before

because i am alone

in the mornings when i have
the strange desire to curl
up in the greying empty shell
of the bathtub

swaddled in its clay cocoon
and listening to
the magnified drumming of my fingers
when i press one ear to its dry surface

because i notice things
like a single eyelash
on my fingertip.
Make a wish Claire.
with a puff
of breath it's
gone

and because after so long at sea
sitting on the dock again
can make the world twirl
and all i wish for

is something
 in the middle.
 why can't the waves lull me to sleep?

Because
 is an apple in the dark
 still red without light
 to shine
 upon it?
 does Plato care
 if the words
 i helplessly string out
 do not match the ones
 i have inside?
 am i still a part of the game
 i do not play?

because if i pass time
 counting days
 i cannot find
 the moments in each one
 to smile.
 because to sleep
 is not always to dream.
 because 'certain
 stars shot madly
 from their spheres.'

because the light is primrose
 and blue
 and shining
 into the bathroom

because i do not have the answers
 anymore

"I am the Impromptu" by Irene Gu, Andover High, Grade 11

I am not like the Sonata
 Carefully formatted in A, B, C, A pattern
 Nor do I have the popularity of a nocturne
 With its sweet serenade appealing to almost everyone

Even the overtly simple melody of
A lowly etude is played more often

I am the Impromptu,
Intricately steeped in layers of polyphonic
agreement
I make up only one tenth of all compositions, for
My offhand spontaneity, my free-form configuration
Can come across as too intense, too ambitious,
Not suitable for public ears
While my rippling scales, my quick cadenza movement
All render me restless, sleepless,
Tossing and turning,
Running and soaring,
Is it over? Already?
Time always evades me

Heavy chords and arpeggios
Have no place in me
For I am the Impromptu,
And I avoid those heavy sinking feelings
All the while, burying them deep deep deep in my core
The untrained ear
Naively glides over them
Hearing only my sweet, harmonious cross-rhythms
But listen to me one time too many
And you'll find my moody soul
Sullen and temperamental
But forever cramped beneath
That relentless and stiff but glossy veneer

Lo! A sforzando!
Weighted with authority
Accompanied by a scream
You'll find these every five measures or so
Shortly before a ritardando
Starting prior to a decrescendo
These downward spirals beginning with
That short and passionate burst of anger
Accompany my life
But then comes an accelerando
And subsequently a steady crescendo
And suddenly I'm up there again, higher than before

I wish I was like a cappricio,
 Or even a polonaise,
 Quick and spirited, always optimistic
 No dissonance so to speak
 But I am unlike them all,
 For rubato is what rules my life:
 That abandonment of all authority, that flagrant disregard
 Is what makes my life a constant glissando
 From one end of the piano to the other
 So turbulent
 So volatile
 So capricious
 I am the Impromptu

“Silent Killer” by Katie Holden, Andover High, Grade 9

The words...
 They clamp down.
 Biting.
 Tearing.
 Ripping at anything they can grasp.
 Painful memories regurgitated,
 hurtful times spit out,
 No one can take the pain for you.
 Nor can anyone say it truly doesn't matter.
 For everyone knows it too well,
 everything matters in your teen years.

Sometimes there is one person,
 other times there are many.
 They are back breaking,
 jaw dropping,
 bonecracking mean.

Relentless...
 until you crack.
 But what happens next?
 Can you move on?
 Can you forget?
 Can you forgive?

“Summer Tranquility” by Katie Holden, Andover High, Grade 9

Rain falls swiftly,
 Not angry but...
 Calm and peaceful.
 She can hear waves lapping steadily as if they expect something from the shore.
 Trees dance with restraint as if being lead by the wind yet the wind is too tired to dance.
 Thermometers hover right around 60
 A light breeze cascades silently just chilly enough to send goose bumps crawling on the skin
 Fog hangs out to dry like a clothes line
 Grass, wild and free sways in the wind back and forth
 Back and forth
 Its mesmerizing, all of it

“A True Reflection” by Amanda Hornick, Andover High, Grade 11

You get all dressed up for the night's concert;
 Your face is covered, for it is required,
 With lipstick, blush, foundation, you convert,
 From pure human to what is more admired.

Oh all this world absorbed in looks of face,
 And fashions that function little at all,
 Except to make appealing half our race,
 We endure things that make us trip and fall.

But like Mulan I feel when in makeup,
 The face on top masks the true face below.
 And yet it's clearly fake when one's close up,
 How can it let my true reflection show?

So while others might like the look when on,
I'd rather have my true face looked upon.

“Woes of a Junior” by Amanda Hornick, Andover High, Grade 11

So many schools do send me mail.
In saving trees they clearly fail.
It's quite an excess;
How'd they get my address?
My inbox tells the same sad tale.

“Happy Veteran’s Day” by Jenny Jung, Andover High, Grade 11

His teeth is smeared with iron and grief,
when he hops the plane to the Bay State.

He swears he can still taste the salt
of his veins when he licks his chapped lips.

He sniffs the curve of his palms,
too, and he blinks because he didn't expect

to smell the lemon-bitter tang of the bullets
he fired and the musk of the mud from when

he dug his fingers into the soil
after seeing his friends all dropping to

their knees, and like gutted, torn-up mattresses,
being dragged over the trenches.

None of them died in his arms.

Xx.

Greene was an idiot, and he should've
shoved his pretty face into the wet dirt.

But the past is dead, and so is Greene.

His red lips were still bent in
that lady-killing grin he always
had.

“Froze like Bambi’s mama,” the
boys say, and that’s it.

Xx.

Hoffman was okay, except after
the third man he struck down,

his mind went over the cuckoo’s
nest. His smiles stretched longer

than heartbreak,
and his fingers wouldn’t stop

twitching like the legs of dying
spiders. “Hoffman, interrupted,”

the boys say, and then they wonder
what he was interrupted from doing.

Xx.

Boots caked with sand and his
face whipped with the sun,

he lies in the off-white linen of his bed
in Woburn. He realizes that he never really left

the sweaty mornings and aching nights
of Afghanistan. God was draped in black

gauze, and he saw the Mona Lisa faces
of all the women crowding in the airports.

Were they smiling, or were they frowning?
He doesn’t want to know, because he’s tired

of knowing too many things.

Xx.

America will respect her troops, but she just can't be bothered about the children who fight in them.

“Nightmare” by Brittney LaBonville, Greater Lawrence Technical High School, Grade 11

I'm up every night to the loud noise,
 To the banging on the walls,
 And the smashing of the pictures.
 I hear mommy crying,
 But HIS voice over throws her weep for help,
 She begs and begs for him to stop,
 To leave and go away,
 The broken voice from mommy, tears me open.
 I feel sorry for her, and I wanna help.
 I yell for him to stop,
 He whips his head back,
 Face beet red, and eyes coming out,
 A face of a demon,
 A man I can't recognize,
 I close my eyes... And I'm gone.
 I'm not too sure were.
 But anywhere is better than here.
 I dream of a better life.
 The next day,
 I wake up,
 Only to repeat the script again

“Self-Inflicted Pain” by Brittney LaBonville, Greater Lawrence Technical High School, Grade 11

Self-inflicted pain,
 It wasn't the pain of losing you
 But maybe of losing myself
 You did me justice,
 Then you left me in the dust,
 Sitting around, waiting for you.

You controlled me.
 Knowing I loved you,
 You took advantage,
 Never caring about your action, just using me as your puppet.
 A hopeless puppet.
 Uncontrolled, I let myself cause the pain.
 I let the pain live on.
 Cause I didn't think you'd keep on
 But I'm wrong.
 I ache to understand If you loved me.
 Knowing I may have loved you more than you deserved.
 It kills me.
 From this experience, I'll embrace the pain, and move forward.

“We Are” by Huzefa Mandviwala, Andover High, Grade 11

We are human beings
 We are not animals trapped in a
 Cage
 But we will bite the hand that feeds us
 Barely enough to survive
 And what is the point of surviving?
 This is no kind of life I want to live,
 Not for my children.
 You tell me about your American dream?
 Open your eyes.

And so we fight
 Like the cornered beast we are made out to be
 We will fight
 Like br'er rabbit
 We, too, were born and bred in this briar patch
 And we, too, will fight, claw, and scratch
 "Drown me, roast me, hang me do whatever you please"
 You cannot stop us.

We will flee from your oppression
 But don't get the wrong impression,
 We are not running away
 From the chains, the pain,
 You're insane, for thinking you could
 Hold us down
 I wear my scars proud like a crown.

And one day, we will prosper,
 Instead of a slave, my son can be a father
 An Africa-American, a black, a free
 And on Christmas he will light his Christmas tree
 On July 4th, he celebrates his OWN independence
 That's the legacy I'll leave for my descendants.

And yet you have the gallantry
 To kill, put us through agony.
 Make us a show of tragedy
 Even you know that's a fallacy.
 It's another Salem witch trial
 Torturing us despite denial
 Kill a father in front of his own child
 Hunt us down with dogs for miles.

Because we are nothing more than property
 Beaten when we behave improperly
 Stolen from birth, it's nothing but a robbery
 Of life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness,
 And democracy

“Fallen Heroes” by Caroline Murtagh, Andover High, Grade 11

We rode our princess bikes with strings of beads Which flowed behind us in November wind
 That swept away the dandelion seeds And dared the winter snowstorms to begin; And we were
 heroes, trained for blood and war Pretending that the trees were evil spies Our hands destroyed
 with force and plastic swords Their fingers grasping at a helpless sky; But handprints drawn in
 chalk were washed away And soon the leaves had fallen from the trees And hand-me-downs
 were placed in bins to stay In sheds with rusty bikes and broken beads. Beneath the spider webs
 and wings of moths Lay truths we labeled Past and left to rot

“Lasagna” by Tarushi Sharma, Andover High, Grade 11

Mumma that lasagna was *so* delicious
 that lasagna, that you made for me and Papa
 we were at the airport.
 It smelt so delicious; the smell,

the baked cheesiness-
it engulfed me in the back seat

But Mumma-
it was a little too salty.
Was it because of the tears, Mumma?
those guilty droplets, sliding down your face?

You thought I couldn't see you, because
you were in the front seat, and I was in the back
but Mumma, I saw everything
I always do

We were parked in the airport parking lot,
on the 5th or 6th floor, overlooking
the streets below and the buildings across from us.
It was pretty cool.

And Mumma, Papa seemed sad.
He was looking straight ahead,
as if there was something fascinating occurring
in those building facing us

I couldn't find anything intriguing in the buildings,
so I looked at you, Mumma,
and you were crying.
You wanted to leave, didn't you?

You made us lasagna, as a parting gift.
Sort of a pathetic gift, if I do say so.
I mean, you're leaving your own blood and soul
and your soul mate of 10, 12 years

and you think you can replace yourself
with a container of lasagna?
And that too, with you crying tears
and maybe even snot, into it?

It's okay though, I forgive you-
you didn't leave that day
Wiping your face, you said,
okay, give me one minute,

you called someone, told him you were staying.
did you stay for us that day?

or did you stay because the smell of lasagna
was too overpowering, and you wanted to eat it
and you knew that with the new 9/11 airport security
you wouldn't be allowed to take it on board.

What made you stay that day Mumma,
and the time before that,
and the time before that,
but not the next time?

Mumma, did you even say bye to me?
I don't think you did.

Mumma, did you come into my room late one night,
and brush back my hair, and kiss my forehead,
knowing that the next day you would be gone
for who knows how long?

Did you tell Papa you were leaving,
or was that a secret too?
Secrets.
There were so many of them.

Well, the day you left,
Papa came to pick me up early from school.
He pulled up in that ugly blue Honda of his,
the one with the windows that you had to crank up,
the one that went through a carwash
with the backseat windows wide open.

Remember how he bought that piece of junk
when he came to America
in hopes of a better, new life for us.
He loved both of us so much.

We got a new life
none of us realized just *how* new that life would end up becoming

So you left.
And Papa came to pick me up early from school
in that stupid, ugly blue car that
I eventually ended up loving and he ended up selling.

I think he just said, she's left,
and I think I just shrugged my shoulders.

And then that night we ended up going
to that Indian restaurant that we all adored, *Thali*.

But even *Thali* was different that day-
they no longer served my favorite dish,
the paratha stuffed with sugar
or some other diabetes-worthy substance.

Mumma did you know
eventually even *Thali* packed up its bags and left,
almost as if you were its favorite customer
and it couldn't continue on without you.

But Mumma the day that you left-
how was the plane ride from here to,
where was it-
Canada, right?

Did they serve you food?
Was it lasagna? Was it too salty, too?
Or did you just dig right in, right into the
delicious cheesy pasta, tearless, snotless

You must have been happy, right?
How was it Mumma?
How was it?
How was that lasagna?

'Cuz I know the lasagna you made me and Papa was good.
Even with its tears, and snot, and sadness,
it was delicious.
Never tasted anything like it since.

“The World Behind the Screen” by Nicholas Wackowski, Andover High, Grade 11

In my world, a face has no value.
My access to the rest of the world
Is sitting behind a half-inch-thick screen,
My voice becoming a mouse and keyboard,
My emotions confined to simple drawings of faces,
And my thoughts projected onto forums replies.

This is my world, where a face has no value.

This is the reality where I live,
 Where a youth and an elder can debate as equals.
 My reality, where the knowledge of mankind,
 Is little more than a click and a wiki away.

This is my world, where a face has no value.
 Changed to an avatar, or edited at leisure.
 My brown hair, or the acne it covers,
 Whether my lips are pulled into a smile,
 Or a calm state of neutrality,
 All of it is hidden, which can be
 Changed into any form I want.

This is my world, where a face has no value.
 Here, it is replaced by something greater:
 A masquerade, of thoughts and ideas
 And obscene innuendos.

“What They Said” by Kayla Yee, Andover High, Grade 11

They told her to slay
 The demons that plague her life
 So she took a gun to her head
 And blew the monsters out her mind.

They told her to cut out
 All that’s cold and rotten
 So she pressed a knife to her heart
 And didn’t even falter.

They told her to give up;
 That hell is all we know
 So she hung a rope up in the bathroom
 Thinking heaven is what she’d find.

They said wait – we’re sorry;
 Life will get better,
 But she was done with their words
 and let herself sink below the water.

“Within” by Kayla Yee, Andover High, Grade 11

I'm keeping a storm
locked up within me,
letting the winds
break down my bones.
The rain floods me
from head to toe,
and clouds hang over
my pounding head.
I could wreck a town,
I could destroy a city,
and yet I keep
this storm within.
But as quiet as
I keep the thunder,
and as gentle as
I make the rains,
a light drizzle falls
from my eyes—
the only sign of the storm
raging within.