

The Anthology

Alexandria City Public Schools 2024-2025

The Anthology is a compilation of extraordinary poems submitted by ACPS students between 3rd and 12th grade for the annual ACPS Poetry Contest. The ACPS Poetry Contest originated over 17 years ago and continues as an annual tradition and means to celebrate and honor our student writers. We are delighted that this is the eighth year the contest has extended beyond elementary to include our secondary schools.

Designated teachers, serving as poetry liaisons at each school, coordinated school-level poetry contests and judging for grades 3-12. Each school judging committee selected one best-of-grade-level poem as well as one overall best-of-school poem.

Poetry liaisons forwarded their school's winning poems to the division contest and a few additional, division-level designations were identified, including division best-of-grade level winners, a creativity award (a special award given by our community judging panel), as well as elementary and secondary student ACPS Poet Laureates. The ACPS Poet Laureate award is selected from the submissions of school overall winners.

Winners from each of the above categories are featured in this 2024-2025 edition of The Anthology. The elementary version of The Anthology also becomes a core text that students in grades 3-5 will study in the poetry unit of the ACPS writing curriculum.

A tremendous thank you to each of the Poetry Liaisons for their dedication and hard work with which this contest, anthology, and ceremony would not be possible. **Thank you to the amazing ACHS Labyrinth staff and Mr. J. Conor Fitzpatrick, Labyrinth advisor, for creating such a wonderful publication for all ACPS staff, students, and families to enjoy.** Additionally, thank you to all the student participants. Enjoy!

Kimberly Schell

ACPS K-12 Literacy Coordinator and
Secondary Literacy Specialist

Carolyn Wooster

Elementary Literacy Specialist

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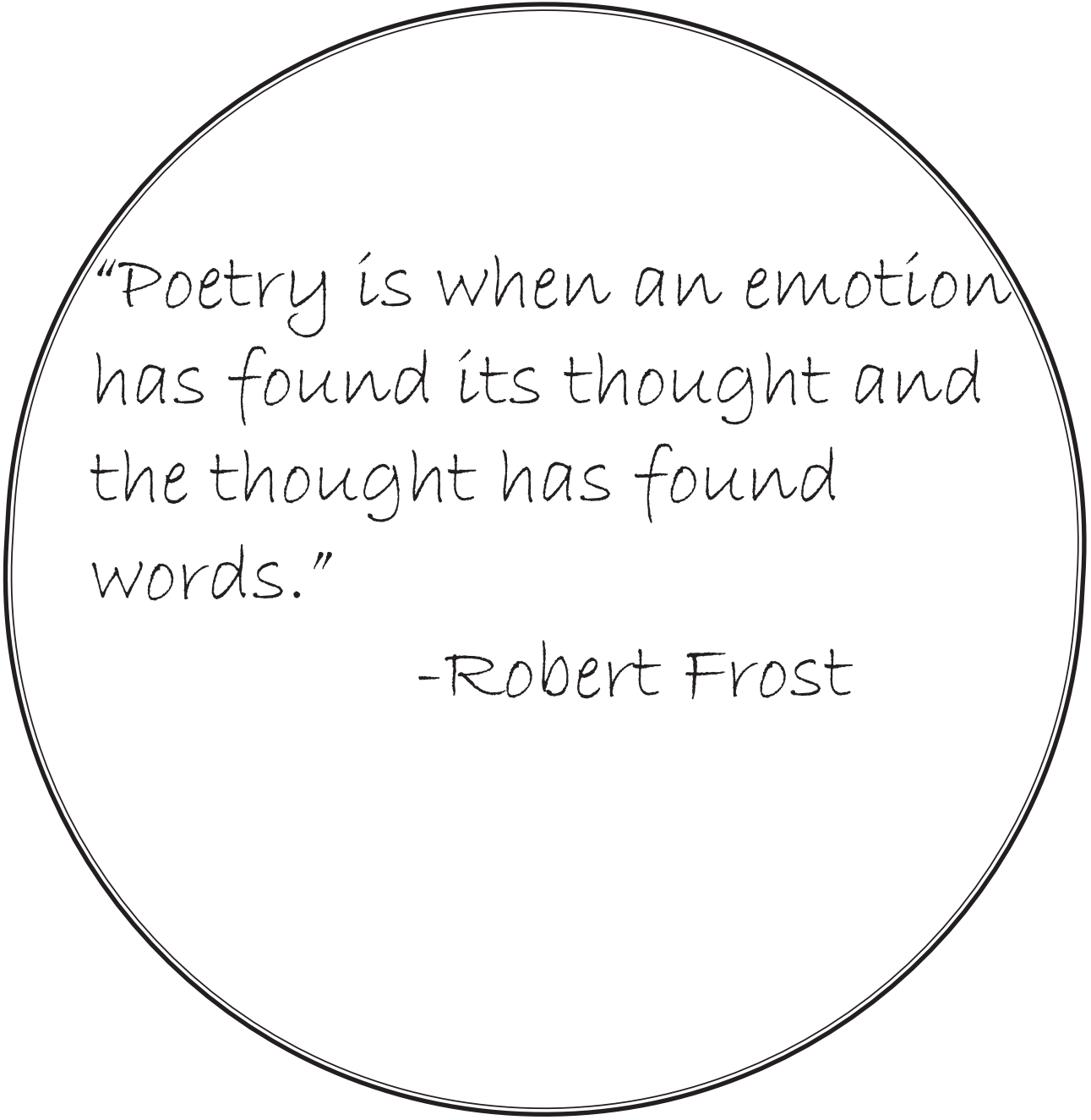
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"Poetry is when an emotion
has found its thought and
the thought has found
words."

-Robert Frost

ELEMENTRY
SCHOOL
WINNERS

Grades 3-5

GRADE 3 WINNER

“Tomorrow is my birthday”

Tomorrow is my birthday
And I can hardly wait
Time is moving much too slow
I’m in an anxious state

Tomorrow is my birthday
And maybe I will see
A llama-looking very fuzzy
very cute bee

Tomorrow is my birthday
and everyone’s excited too
because every year on my birthday
We’ll be able to go to the zoo

GRADE 4 WINNER

“Fields of Freedom”

Inspired by the book *Number the Stars*

For many days, for many weeks, for many years you will find me running through the sweet, fresh fields of freedom.

I will never HALT as soldiers say for I follow their commands I will lose the fields of freedom. I will stand up tall and never fall through the fields of freedom. I will not be a shallow worker nor a violent fighter. I will fight in peace and make my way to the fields of freedom. My way, Yes, it may be different but it works just as well to open the gates of the fields of freedom. For I am The Fields Of Freedom.

GRADE 5 WINNER

“Be Loud”

Be quiet
anger
bUbBlinG at the surface
your evil smile
glaring at me
through piercing eyes
Be quiet
sadness
my emotions threatening to
s
 p
 i
 l
 l
into a once quiet sea
Be quiet
joy
a rushing waterfall
SpLaShEs me
with emotion
what?
Be loud!
don't be quiet
Be LOUD!

Loretta Shapiro Staley
Ms. Tertocha

OVERALL WINNER

“The Beauties of Life”

I am here running through the silver field
My head held high, through the sun's light I heal
The small but wise bees are like fritter fleas
In bunches of tiny raspberry trees

I see the sun up in the sky, so bright
Like a light in the middle of the night
Then as the shining light begins to fray
I see the sun swiftly hiding away

Though all the light the night has absorbed
I just keep running through the endless world
My driftless wonders never ever end
Just like true and real friendship till the end

I am here running through the silver field
Never wanting my dreams to stop or yield

GRADE 3 WINNER

“Water”

Splish, splash, sploosh.
Cold engulfs my body
like a monster gulped me down in 1 bite.
I burst out shattering the wet glass around
me.
I gulp for air.
And dive into a new world.

**Cordelia Heslink
Ms. Andonyadis**

GRADE 4 WINNER

“Pupusas”

I smell cheese
I feel squishy
I see salsa
I hear it is good
It is good yummy
What could it be?
It's pupusas

GRADE 5 WINNER

“MATH”

Mesmerize
Amazing
Think
Helpful

**Brianna Rivera Membreno
Mr. Minor**

OVERALL WINNER

“Nature Poem”

You can always see the sun shine grow
When you go outside for a morning view
There are lot of plant and trees which you can see
Without any device you can see them with your eye
You can see chirping birds
And sometimes squirrels
People are cutting plants and trees
And building schools, houses and more
There was a day with no building either roads
And there will be a day with no organisms

OVERALL SCHOOL WINNER

“Reading”

Its a night for reading when the breeze blows cool
The start chorus merrily,
In the breeze
and you can step into another world
and become the most powerful person on earth
Or the weakest sad soul in the face of death

A good book can make you feel most alive
than the real wolrd
The best books transport you
better than a dream
and are more meaningful than a memory

In a book you feel the the heat battle
or bring a king to his knees

GRADE 3 WINNER

"Night"

The darkness upon the sky at night
Stars beside the bright moonlight
Colder
Not like the sun
Warmer than ice.

GRADE 4 WINNER

"Chipotle"

Crunchy taco shells
Hot and delicious burrito
If you have too much your wallet will hurt
Pinto beans
Oversized burritos
Tiny beans
Loving employees
Eat CHIPOTLE!

**Andy Benitez
Ms. Allen**

GRADE 5 WINNER

"Peaceful as a pond"



A still, quiet pond, with a flower closed up
 A frog ribbits going to the edge of the pond
 The frog jumps into the pond soaring like a rabbit
 The lake explodes like a miner digging for gems

The flower opens up at a snail's pace; too slow for a human to wait for
 A fish swims across the pond looking for food to eat
 A flower petal falls from the flower into the pond

The fish meets the frog curiously staring at it
 The flower petal gets nibbled on by the fish
 A fly buzzes around the lily pad
 The frog stretches its tongue eating the fly up

The frog swims to the land and the fish swims away
 The two animals separating like two same sides of a magnet
 The frog hops onto the land while the fish swims away to the lily pad
 The pond is quiet yet again.

OVERALL WINNER

“Butterfly Butterfly”

Butterfly butterfly, sparkled blue,
flying in the sky a joyful view.
Through fields of flowers, soft and bright,
whispers of freedom take graceful flight.

Beautiful wings in the sun's glow
flying gently, nice and slow.
Nature's treasure, so light and free,
a beautiful moment to see, butterfly, butterfly
that's all it needs.

Frank Mensah
Ms. Mathis

GRADE 3 WINNER

“Summer”



Summer
the sun
on
my
back chilling
by the
pool
the
sand
between
my feet
the waves
crashining
the cold
sweet
treats
the
long
days
a lot of sleeping in the summer
Summer, Hurry Up!

GRADE 4 WINNER

“Dance”

The click, clack of pointe shoes
Dancing across the sleek marbly floor.
The scene of dancers
Practicing their routines.
The sound of the dance instructor
Calling out the steps.
Dance.

**Addelyn Averette
Ms. Moquin**

GRADE 5 WINNER

"Fantasy Books"

Open a book on a rainy day
That's where you'll be swept away
You laugh, you love, you feel the world
You're not just reading words
You're imagining a whole new world
You feel like you just unfurled a whole new world while you opened a
book on a rainy day
Curled up in a comfy way.

OVERALL WINNER

"I always wanted..."

I always wanted to go on a roller coaster,
But I'm scared.

I always wanted a pool in my backyard,
But my backyard is small.

I always wanted a mansion,
But mansions cost a lot.

I always wanted a perfect life
But I got the life I love.

GRADE 3 WINNER

"This Is Just To Say"

(Inspired by poet William Carlos Williams)

I have eaten
all the strawberries
they were very
delicious

and you
were probably
saving for a
midnight snack

I tried
to resist
but within
a glnce
they were
all gone

Forgive me
they were
so yummy,
sweet and
juicy

Gabriella Chavez Garcia
Mrs. Phox



GRADE 4 WINNER

"Look at Nature"

Look at the trees, Oh so beautiful
Look at the leaves that are so colorful
Look at the squirrel eating an acorn
Look at the baby bird who's just been born
Look at the sky and also that cloud
Look at the wolf who howls super loud
Look at the flowers who blossom and bloom
Look at the tiny brown tasty mushroom
Look at the bugs who scatter around
Look at the worm that's inside the ground
Look at the beehive with tasty honey
Look at the beautiful day that is sunny
Look at the river that runs super fast
Look at the snail who in the race came last
Look at the plant who grew from a seed
Look at the little very new weed
Look at the bat who soars in the twilight
Look at the hawk who will soon be out of sight
Look at the ants searching for food
Look at the woodpecker that pecks at the wood
Look at the spider that's spinning its trap
Look at the liquidy delicious tree sap
Look at the birds who sing in the day
Look at the birds prepare to fly away
Look at the plants that animals eat
Look at the lion who searches for meat
Look at the crunchy and fluffy white snow
Look at the rats who are in tunnels below
Look at the ants that search hard for food
When I look at nature it enlightens my mood

David Vindel
Mrs. Calvo

GRADE 5 WINNER

"Speak"

I can speak
I can speak
You can't speak for me.
I'm mad you always talk for me
I'm so foolish to let you
Talk over me.

I have a voice too.
I feel like a doll when you always
Mouth my words

Now shhh
you can't always
Mouth my words
They are my words
Now is my time to speak to speak
I feel heartbroken

OVERALL WINNER

"Squid Game"

In a world of games, so strange and new,
Where players face challenges, tough to get through
Red light, green light, a giant doll stands,
Her eyes like lasers, scanning the lands.

Marbles clink softly, like whispers at night,
Players hold tight, hoping for light.
Sugar shapes break with a crack and a snap,
A cookie's sweet fate, a sugary trap.

The guards in red, like shadows they move,
Their faces are masks with nothing to prove.
A tug-of-war, where strength meets the sky,
Teams pull together, aiming so high.

The glass bridge gleams, a path full of fear,
One wrong step, and the end is near.
In this game of life, where dreams collide,
Friendships are tested, and tears are cried.

Yet hope shines bright, like stars in the dark,
Each player a candle, with a flickering spark.
In the Squid Game World, where courage is key,
They fight for their lives, for a chance to be free.

Kailey Ramirez
Ms. Walter

GRADE 3 WINNER

"SLEEP"

Shut your eyes
Lights out
Earth goes dark
Earn rest
Pull up covers
good night!

GRADE 4 WINNER

"The home that I love"

I smell melted butter on chicken
that's never tasted better

I feel homes that are made
of rough stone and sand

I see people smiling
and greeting each other

I hear laughter and dancing
mixed with the beat of drums

This is Afghanistan, the home that I love.

GRADE 5 WINNER

"Strive"

Willpower
The reason we are still here
And not just
Still

Courage
Our hearts of pure gold
Of Steel, of Strength,
Our mission soon fulfilled

Love
The Ability to see good
And know that some shadows
Just yearn to be seen
To be recognized

Strive
To use all our unwavering willpower
To have true courage
To remember love, and always try

Strive
Fly higher
Here, giving up is not optional
And Fear, is just another hurdle

OVERALL WINNER

"Imagine"

In a realm where whispers weave through the trees
Magical dreams flowing up the sparkly streams
And valleys where curious creatures intertwine
Glories of stardust and patterns aligns
Iridescent streams flowing with secrets untold
Nature all around shining bold
Each moment here is a treasure waiting to be found

Imagining as we sleep and dream safe and sound

**Hidote Zulla
Mr. Perin**

GRADE 3 WINNER

"Love of England"

England
Hearing the bagpipes
Raining all day
Big Ben ringing
Fish and chips yum!
Walking in the park
Smelling ice cream
Lots of taxis and pigeons
See the London Eye up in the sky
As high as the clouds
Trumpets loud
The king is coming
People gathering up by the palace
Taking pictures
Love of England

Luke Earnest
Ms. Harris

GRADE 4 WINNER

"Explosion"

Science
So sad when it explodes
The BOOM The CRACK The POP
All over the table
Coating the floor
Dripping from ceilings
Lining the walls
Restarting Again and Again and Again

Mix this, Mix that
Stir it, Stir it
Pull that out
Don't touch that
The same result every time

An Explosion
BOOM CRACK POP
Restarting for the Millionth time

GRADE 5 WINNER

"Amazing Self"

Your skin is not paper so don't draw on
it
Your body is not a book so don't judge
it
Your heart is not a door so don't lock
it
Your life is not a movie so don't end
it
Remember you are amazing just the
way you are

OVERALL WINNER

"The World"

Breath in equalness
Breath out separation
Breath in the beauty of nature
Breath out destruction
Breath in warmth
Breath out coldness
Breath in kindness
Breath out meanness
Breath in responsibility
Breath out blames
Breath in kindness
Breath out unkindness

**Miah Wilson
Ms. Harris**

GRADE 3 WINNER

"Wind"

From a cat's point of view

Wind rushes through my fur,
Blowing whispers through the air.

Each time I run fast,
The wind is there.

Whenever I look outside on a windy day,
The wind is there,
To comfort me.

Wind is wonderful and quirky,
although it's sometimes cold.
The wind is a friend of mine.

GRADE 4 WINNER

"Emotional Storm"

Pushed Over, Looked Over
The Winds swirl around your head.
Overwhelming, everything is rising and falling.
The Storm just ...Swallows you up.
Fear, Loneliness
It rages on and on.
The storm gets bigger and bigger.
Rain rolling down your face.
Hated, rejected, everything, it's all too much.
Alone, all alone – no one to comfort you.
Fear, Hate, Loneliness, Rejection – That's it!
You feel lost in all the storms,
One light gives you hope.
That light is someone who will comfort you, protect you.
Someone who will push away the storm.
Just like all you ever wanted...
Friendship

GRADE 5 WINNER

"When I Broke Free"

Before I broke free the chains that bound me
brought me down to Earth when I tried to fly.

But when I broke free the chains fell off and I flew so high.
The ocean looked like a puddle and the continents like green and white candies.

When I broke free all the ideas came to me.
I was free to do what I want and be who I am.
When I broke free.

OVERALL WINNER

"Painting the World"

I have respect for the people that paint the world.
They paint the ugly dark reds and the bright, happy yellows.
I love the people that paint the world.
When they capture the bright rays of light shining down on the water.
Would you paint the world?
Would you dare to paint the dark clouds and the frowns on people's faces? I would.
I would paint the frowns, the happy glows, the dark clouds, the disgusting greens, and the hot
pinks and auburn smokiness.
Now, you should be warned, painting the world is a hard and dangerous task.
You have to capture every aspect of the image and every beam of sunshine, nothing can be
left out.
But sometimes, we make what other people think are mistakes, and they get angry because it
is simply different.
We paint a flag too rainbow, or a person's skin too dark or their face too "Imperfect", an Im-
migrant too illegal, or a woman too powerful.
We meant to paint it this way, but some people don't like when we use the whole pallet.
And yet, you can come join me.
I hope you will come and paint the world too.
Grab your paintbrush, and let's go.

GRADE 3 WINNER

"People Are Like Grapes"

People are like grapes
They come in bunches
They share the space
Each one is different
Some are sour, some are sweet That is
neat
Smooth when they are young They wrinkle
when they're old Some grapes are bumpy
like a tongue And that's what makes them
so bold

GRADE 4 WINNER

"The River"

The source of all life
Rushing through forests
Cut like a knife
Crisp and clean
No gasoline
You feel the clean air
And forget despair

**Violet Roeker
Ms. Selber**

GRADE 5 WINNER

"Summer"

Swimming
Under water
Mosquitos
Melting ice cream
Eating watermelon
Relaxing

OVERALL WINNER

"Life Is a Gift"

Life is a gift	
Love is the lift	
A bridge to infinity	Events seen in memory
To travel to eternity	Become extra sensory
	As we smile and recall
Life is a gift	The lifetime we saw
Love is the lift	
That embraces our hearts	Together we are united
Which never departs	Live happy and excited
	In awe we inspire
Time is a season	For our soul never retires
It is precious for a reason	
We live out our destiny	
Which in turn leaves our legacy	

Mudaser John Khadim
Ms. Selber

GRADE 3 WINNER

“Yellow Sun Yellow Sun”

Yellow sun yellow sun
Giving us light for our day
Shrining bright in our eyes
Biggest in the solar system
And a shining star
Makes the day warmer
But when it's gone the moon is here
Then we sleep to see the sun again
And see it shine in our eyes

Kirubel Tewoldeberhan
Ms. Ngwashi

GRADE 4 WINNER

“Trees”

I am like a tree when people are near me, so quiet, so still, sometimes I feel a thrill.
Everywhere I go everybody knows that I'm like trees and trees are like me.

Trees are quiet, there is never any trouble. They have their pretty colors in all, especially when
it is fall.

They have bark, which is sometimes dark, lights are dimmed while leaves blow in the wind.
I'm like trees and trees are like me.

GRADE 5 WINNER

“Suffering”

And through my suffering
The sun rose and set
The seasons shifted
The clocks hands ticked
On and life moved
Forward without me
Me i never forgave
It for that but then
Its telling me
That there will always be another
Day for me
To rise with it
To enjoy the
Seasons with it
To lend a hand
For others and
Move forward with it

Nasib Amin
Mrs. Paschal-Gilmore

OVERALL WINNER

“Emergency Measures”

My sister and I watch
the Five-O’-Clock news,
Which spells out
Our worth in the world.
According to reports,
It’s somewhere on the minus side.
That may be only hearsay, but how?
How can I stay strong in a world
Where fear and hate waits outside
My door?
When poetry bursts like a dam
And a river of wisdom-words
Rushed through the streets I call
Home.
Can I really find fuel
For the future
In the past?

Eliana Kassaye
Ms. Levis

GRADE 4 WINNER

"Peace On The Beach"

The last bit of sun-
light, shells washing up
On the seashore.
The horizon turning
Orange, deep as
Molten gold.
The last bits of sunlight
peacefully fading away to
the night.

GRADE 5 WINNER

"Father, Father"

You shouldn't have left me Father,
Father you are strong
He lifts me up when I'm sad.
Father, Father he is rough but he has a heart.
He left me when I was 3 but I'm okay.
Father, Father I still like him tears fall from my eyes.
My eyes are full of tears.
I always thought I had a dad but I did not have one.
But I do have god as my dad.
he was a real one dad if you hear this I love but
guess.
what you weren't here for me
p.s.
I miss you I hate you, Father Father, you're valuable as
gold.
but not as valuable as my heart.
I hate you I do I love maybe I do.

Niema Daniels
Ms. Campbell

OVERALL WINNER

"What is real?"

Reality is one thing
Dreaming is the other
What is really real? And what does it mean?
And how can we find it? And what am I asking? you shall
Ask from me
Life is a dark void that shall never answer from its deep, dark, hole
And to be honest with you I don't really know the answer to the
lock on your curiosity door
But I can assure one thing about this mystery
That A dream doesn't become reality through magic, it takes
sweat, determination, and hard work you see
And that's not all you also need to know
That hope is an ingredient for your mind to come true
And also before I end a masterpiece
I just want you to think about what is reality?

GRADE 3 WINNER

"Lovely Flowers"

flowers bloom in colors bright,
Reaching up to catch the light.
Petals dance in gentle air,
Spreading beauty everywhere.

Raindrops help them grow so tall,
Sunshine Warms them big and small.
Butterflies stop by to Play,
As they shine all through the day.

Laiba Chowdhury
Ms. Jackson

GRADE 4 WINNER

"A Day In the life At School!"

The sun is shining the wind is gliding
through the sky kids running around with
a kite the night falls stars are
bright moon is shining through my
window thinking about morning time

gotta get up in the morning
to see the sun shine
Birds chirping at this so early
time looking back at my lovely
bed one last time before heading
out the door I look at my perentes
waving my hand while

Saying goodbye ready to run
my road to success knowing
ill have the best time.

GRADE 5 WINNER

"The haunted house"

The road was broken
My socks were soaked
The drive was long
I thought absurd
About my bird I left
Going to this haunted house was not going to be worth it
I listened to my song
I arrived
Then noticed
I got told my bird died
I wanted to turn around
But i know i can't
As i entered
I saw this squid
I left the room quickly and ran
Looking for an exit
The squid had
Hid the
Exit i was looking for,
Blocked.
I learned to not
Go in a haunted house

**Rayane ait Jabour
Mr. Patrick**

OVERALL WINNER

"Captured in a cage like a bird"

We are Afghan girls who are supposed to be free.
Not trapped like a bird in a cage with no wings to fly freely .
We are supposed to have education. And freedom.
We need education.
We need jobs, we need to Live happily .
We need Money to go shopping. we need to go outside.
We don't need anyone to rule us.
we don't need anyone to hold our wings and cut it for us, not allowing us to go
anywhere.
We need the education we earned. And the education that boys have we should too.
Boys and girls are the same, they are both people we both need education.
We don't have anything to hide!
we don't need to be in a cage locked like a bird.
We are not a puppet. And You can't control us like one.
We love birds to play with but not to play with their feelings or control their life.
We need help. You need to rescue us and the others. That is a girl but feels like she is a
captured bird.

This poem tells the stories of some girl from afghanistan which is not just some it is a
lot.

GRADE 3 WINNER

"The Meadow"

The meadow, big or small,
there are people walking on you.
How does it feel?
Hard and uncomfortable or comfy, soft, and cozy?
I like you,
meadow
how I wonder about you.
and how birds are pecking you for food
How does it feel?
Oh, meadow
how I wonder about you
does it feel good in the cold with the breeze?
Or bad?
Does it feel good in the hot weather when your grass is dry?
Or bad?
Oh, meadow.
Now it is dawn and it has been a long day for you
gathering nutrients for your soil
and now you are in a comfy position
and ready for some sleep
you see a comet passing by that said good job good night!
Have a good day and night!

Yael Tay Knerr
Ms. Jackson

GRADE 4 WINNER

"Mi papa"

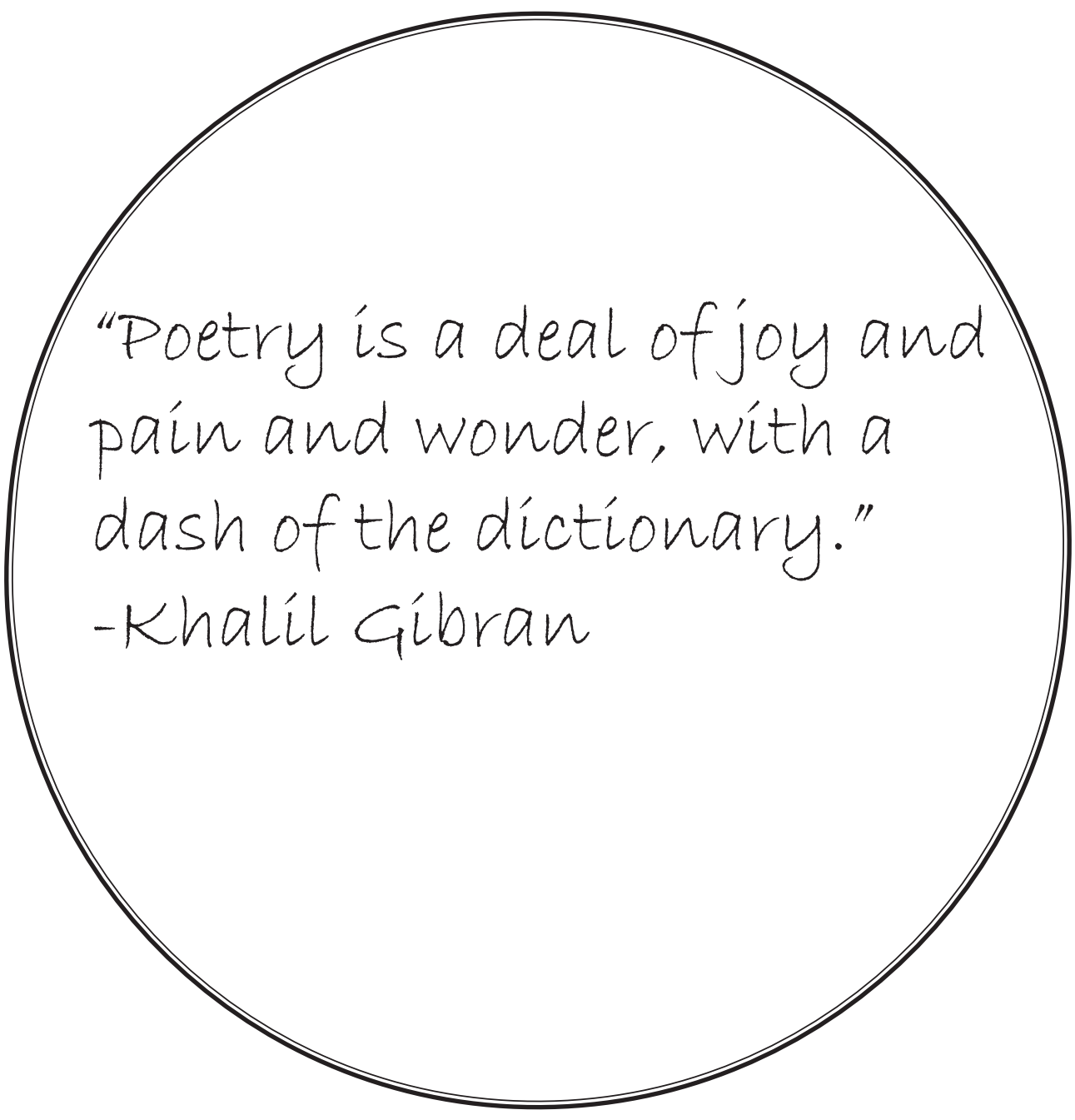
He is a great cook
and he makes things for me and my family.
It's just that
Dads are the world
They help you with everything
Even if you're sad
your dad will always be there
Make sure that you love him inside your heart
because he loves you so much.
I hope you love your Dad
because he does hard work for you to have a place to live.
I hope this makes you love your Dad more than you do.
Just to say you should love your Dad so much.

OVERALL WINNER

"Today upon the stairs"

Today upon the stairs
I met a girl who wasn't there.
And I hope she wouldn't come again
Oh, how I wish she wouldn't stare.
Then I saw something on the wall
it said "help or else".
A few days later I saw her upon the stairs again.
she said want to be friends.
I said yes
what a bless
We played with toys all day
while singing a song.
It goes like
la la lala la la la la la la.
I woke up in woah
with black clothes.
word spread from the news
I'm missing
but said who?

Layla Dermidoff
Ms. Cepede



"Poetry is a deal of joy and
pain and wonder, with a
dash of the dictionary."

-Khalil Gibran

"Start writing, no matter what. The water does not flow until the faucet is turned on."

-Louis L'Amour

SECONDARY SCHOOL WINNERS

Grades 6-12

GRADE 6 WINNER

"The Chase"

Don't chase what you know is out of reach,
Like stars that sparkle while you lay on the beach.
You can run and try your best to grab,
However, that will just make you sad.

Some things you desire may just slip away,
No matter how hard you try each day.
It's very much tempting to keep chasing and running fast,
But sometimes some things are best to let pass.
What is meant for you will eventually find its way,

So always remember,
Trust the time,
And wait for your day.

Kevin Quintanilla
Mrs. Padilla

GRADE 7 WINNER

"Music"

Music

[Mwu-sik]

Vocals and/ or instruments combined to make harmonies

As in: the sound of the guitar floats through the air

As the guitarist's hand dance gracefully along the strings

Bringing a smile to my face

As in: the singer's voice easily hypnotizes everyone who walks by like a siren

And I sing along with the words that have been engraved in my heart

And tattooed into my brain.

As in: I move to the beat like i'm under a spell that can't be broken

The loud bass and electric guitar sending shock waves to my ears

As in: a melody that drowns out the world as the sound waves fill my heart

With a familiar feeling called home- That's music

GRADE 8 WINNER

"Wealth"

Rich in money but broke inside
Rich but has a heart of a dog
Money, Money, Money
Wealth Is all they care about
Rich but makes people feel like
Trash

Rich but blind to the poor
Thinks they can control
Everything
Leaves family for wealth

Rich but has no family
Rich but is depressed
Rich but is hiding from the world
Rich but can never fool people

BOOM!
Passes away
All the wealth is there but
No sister, No mom, No brother, No dad
no life
But Money is still there
Alive.

Marhama Agha
Ms. Weis

OVERALL WINNER

"Immigrant"

im - mi - grant

A person who migrated to another country for a better life.

As In, a person who migrated to another country for a better life

As in, a person who tried their best to provide for their family and found solution ssssss
ssssSssh, do you hear that? They're looking for us. Please hide.

Said an old grandmother who escaped from dangerous criminals in her country, but is
considered one here.

As in a "dangerous alien" who is actually a seven year old kid.

As in the hardworking "ALIENS" who give back to the community, sometimes for than
natives.

As in, the innocent people.



GRADE 6 WINNER

"Voices we can't silence"

Some people might say,
Poetry is just words that dance on a page,
Or that it's simply poetry.

Others use it to share stories,
To talk about the world, their lives, or other people.
Some turn it into songs that make animals in the forest sing
And objects move.
Teachers might also use it to shape our minds.

But for me,
Poetry is something different.
It's more than just words,
It's personal, relatable,
And it comes straight from the heart.

It's how we speak when we feel unheard,
Because not everyone has the chance to speak,
And fear takes that ability from most of us.

But it's our job, our choice,
To fight that fear and
to make our voices heard.
Since the day we were born,
We've carried a spark in our eyes
A fire that refuses to be dimmed.
We fight through every hardship,
Pushing toward the success we fought for.

BibiAmina Mansoor
Mr. Smith

GRADE 7 WINNER

"Fate"

A delicate spool wrapped with powerful threads,
 Each stitch woven, intertwined by skilled hands,
 Treads of hope, despair, and all in between.
 To create what's called a new life, and with it a beautiful dream.

Each thread tells an unique story, a diferent memory,
 A divine masterpiece created expertly,
 Ethereal threads whisper every secret in time.
 Every stitch refects the journey of your life.

Somewhere under the deep dark crimson sky, cries of war ignite,
 Hints of darkness come alive, sirens singing a dangerous rhyme.
 Roses wither while thorns thrive; chaos the only thing there that remains,
 Minds shiver with madness, while souls and trust shatter like weakened chains.

Within that melancholy haze a faintficker of a star glows,
 Gently guiding you through the night, when the icy wind blows,
 A fire emitting warmth in fierce winter's wrath,
 Illuminating your hidden and shadowed path.

Standing beside you no matter how difficult the fight.
 Staying by your side no matter the echoes of time,
 Guiding you in your journey to fulfill your dream,
 Trust in yourself, and let fate help you be a radiant beam.

Explore the oceans, and don't fear the daunting high tide,
 You are the captain of that voyage, and fate is your guide,
 Chart a path never created before, and let your spirit free,
 Let yourself weave your own story's tapestry.

GRADE 8 WINNER

"Winter"

The air was like a thief,
stealing peace without a sound.
A cold wind blew across my face,
and I became a block of ice.

The wind howled
as I passed the bus windows,
one by one.
I sat down in my seat.

I was in class. Thinking about my father.
My father's hair had turned white.
Mom says , "He has helped you cross a great river."
My father had hidden his hardships in his white hair.

I have learned my lesson.
Father smiles everyday.

Sadra Ehsani
Mr. Abramsohn

OVERALL WINNER

"Token"



Let's all take a moment
To acknowledge our potential
We've always been influential
Rock and roll, stonewall, dance hall
No amount of presidential

Power

Could take that away

It'd take much too much time and energy
To go around and individually strip
each and every one of their dignity

But isn't that what defunding is for?
What humiliation is for?
And segregation is for?

I think that's a bit insecure
You know we'll forever be better than our oppressors
So you silence us before we get the best of you

You're only ahead because you made it so
Over 300 years ago
And your great grandparents
Fed you lies to help you grow

"How could they be better than you
When you know what they don't?"

So the brainwashing began
Of the under talented and the over entitled

But on the other side of town
'You can't be this
You can't be that
You're much too brown
You're far too black'

And so it went
And so it goes
We're living like 1920 and 1820 and 1720 and
1619....

Wait.

Who has this benefitted? Who did this change?
Lynching up to '22, every fruit looks strange
What's it gonna start now? Who will it enrage?
What's it gonna take for them to change?

'Cause every time we fall back, our history gets faded
And someone else can take the credit, even though we made it
But every time we stand up, look at how we're painted
Aggressive, divisive, explosive, racist

But how can I be racist? I don't have the power
So other people lie and steal and go and take what's ours
And who's going to stop 'em?
Current administration? I think not

(continues on pg 70)

Johnna-Averi Brooks
Ms. Shaw

OVERALL WINNER (CONTINUED)



(continued from pg 69)

So another innocent's in jail or shot?
Doesn't surprise me
When nothing has the guts to change, we lose heartbeats
When y'all are seeing red with rage, we lose heart beats
You get the whole year but change our month to one week

And you're making me think of all this
When I should be carefree
Living out some made up teenage dream
At least for the next four years

But not 'cause of 47, no, that'll take eternities

It's 'cause I'll be out of mom's house, riddled with my own worries
And I'll have to get a job, but not 'cause of DEI
God knows that'll be buried, in an urn, emulsified

Just like our pride, 'cause no one knows the hurt
A generation'll grow up and not know their worth
And honestly I can't decide which is worse
To be naive or to have to have lived it first.

Johnna-Averi Brooks
Ms. Shaw

GRADE 6 WINNER

"Behind the Veil"

The
moment
I walk into school,
the moment I interact with others,
is as if I am placing upon myself an ill-defined veil

A veil that clouds me.
A veil that hides me
there appears

a version of me that only exists to please others,
and to be prettier and to be nicer.
behind the veil
I am
angry
behind the veil
I am
scared
behind the veil
I am
hurting
behind the veil
I am
behind the veil
there is no one who listens
I want to just cry
And sometimes I pull away
because I need someone to
pull me close again

So I'm begging you, look behind the veil
and see what's there

Estelle Garloch
Mrs. Jannings

GRADE 7 WINNER

"Dreams of Fire"

In the still of night,
where the stars start to shine,
Dreams come alive,
like a secret design.

They flutter like butterflies,
graceful and free,
Leading us through worlds
we're excited to see.

In this land of slumber,
our hopes start to glide,
Dreams are like rivers,
with nothing to hide.

So let's chase our dreams
and let our minds soar.
In the realm of our dreams,
we can be so much more.

GRADE 8 WINNER

"Ode to Korean Fried Chicken Wings"

Korean Fried Chicken Wings
Is the food for the kings

Their crunch makes them perfect for lunch
Always getting a bunch so we can all munch

How many you may ask
My father says sixty will fulfill our task

For each one is only the size of a fist
My mother says we should get less but is dismissed

For Korean Fried Chicken Wings are so sweet
that it will taste like a pastry or any other treat

And the chicken is so tender
That if you had it on the battlefield, you would never want to surrender

When it comes to the sauce though, beware
because if your not careful, the waterfall of flavor will go everywhere

You may ask, are they worth the mess?
And to that, I will always say yes

OVERALL WINNER

"Beating"

I am standing back behind the stage

B-bum b-bum

I can feel the sound of the music pulsing under
my feet

B-bum b-bum

The sounds slowly flow through my body

B-bum b-bum

They migrate up to my head

B-bum b-bum

They send thoughts of failing, or letting everyone
down.

B-bum b-bum

I push them away and my mind goes blank

B-bum b-bum

I hear my teammates saying words of affirmation

B-bum b-bum

I can hear my thoughts yelling at me

B-bum b-bum

I am thinking about so much but at the same time
nothing at all

B-bum b-bum

Suddenly, my teammate grabs my hand and it's
time to go.

B-bum b-bum

I step up the stairs and onto the stage

B-bum b-bum

The stage is hazy and bright like a dream.

B-bum b-bum

I look up and I am blinded by lights

B-bum b-bum

I get into position and put my head down

B-bum b-bum

I pray to myself and and my mind goes blank

B-bum b-bum b-

Suddenly, It stops.

Ruby Hoffman
Ms. Lesczynski

GRADE 6 WINNER

"School"

Such a uncomfortable place to be sometimes.

Cool friendly place sometimes.

Having friends can make things feel better.

Ok how can you make friends if you are kind and kindness will come back.

Ok what if the kindness does not come back then they are not friends.

Life is short, don't make it worse for people, just make it better for yourself.

GRADE 7 WINNER

"The Maldives"

The cool blue waters

The breeze swinging through palm trees

The seagulls soaring

Emily Amezquita Cordova
Ms. Miner

OVERALL WINNER

"Untitled"

Two houses Two homes
Two kitchens Two phones
Two couches where I lay
Two places that I stay
Moving, moving here and there
from Monday to Friday, I'm everywhere
don't get me wrong it's not that bad
but oftentimes it mkaes me sad.
I want to live that happy life
with a happy dad and his loving wife.
A picket fence, a shaggy dog,
a fireplace with a burning log
but it's not real, it's just a dream.
I cannot cry or even scream
So here I set with cat number three.
Life would be easy if there were two of me.

Kali Harris
Ms. Layman

OVERALL WINNER

"Hard Times"

Some things are not the same,
Life of broken dreams leaves you in pain.
Battling drug addiction is hard to tame,
Living life in shame is not the way.
At night, missing home, all I can do is pray
For God to save me some day.
I know I made some mistakes,
Hitting rock bottom is what made me break.
Battling drug problems, I'm sorry, God,
Since I never knew it would be this way,
Doing the same thing every day,
Wake up, go to school every day,
Locked down every day.
But I did this, I made the mistake,
I hurt my team,
I was mean, I was a fiend,
I had to man up and get clean;
I have to fight hard for my team.
I have to do the right thing.
I've got to wake up on time to go to school every day.
I've got to go to class every day.
I maintain sobriety every day.
I'm going to go to church every Sunday.
If I go home, I'm going to get baptized on Sunday.
I will ask God to forgive me some day.
It's time to live life the right way.

GRADE 10

"The Strength Within You"

They try to break you, with words like stones,
Thrown with harmful intent, sharp as thrones.
Each hateful comment, each taunting shout,
Made you hide, made you doubt.

Underneath that heat, a special spark remained,
A voice that whispered through the pain:
You are enough, no matter their lies,
You will know your worth, as you start to strive.

You will rise from the shadows, and find your light,
Your wounds will heal, and your scars will fly.
From every tear from your eye, from every fight,
You learned your strength, you learned your might.

Their words controlled you, but only then,
When you gave in, when you let them.
Now you stand, fearless, unbroken,
A survivor, strong, and still unspoken.
Their chains will no longer hold you down,
You found your wings, you found your crown.
You are not what they claimed,
You are important, and you have a name.

OVERALL WINNER

" Do Light Bulbs Pity Flies"

Like moth to candle, I wish we could be.
Though more and more we seem a fly to bulb.
I do not wish our end be one of glee,
Only that a gentler story be told.
To be a candle, warm with pooling wax,
Be soft, and made from nature's gentler hand,
I lose my hope, feeling the thunder cracks,
Electric light I strike on you unplanned.
If only you so delicately flew,
On fragile wings, with graceful innocence.
For scornful looks you're casted, I knew.
To me your graceless zeal is no offense.

A wish it's only, that we be subdued,
Our end, I know, is violent and crude.

Rauidhri Schiefelbein
Ms. Trigg

GRADE 12 WINNER

“The Ghost is Me”

I am the man beneath the sand
I sway in the distance
Floating through my endless mind and waning in the river
Through the wind I travel onward hoping for an end

Seeing rocks then trees then faces I wonder of their thoughts
Why are they among the trees while I am high above
I understand their whispers and hear their little cries
and yet in comparison to mine they are silent
They turn and look and laugh and see
Looking at the ghost is me
Judging by their horrid faces they disapprove of my ways

Forging on I find a farm of esteem and endless glamour
A table set for two it seems in this requisite manor
They sit down to dine while I slowly fly around the window getting more enamored
They laugh and talk and eat and sing
Rejoice for what you bring
Here in my house i'll always be
Ready for you and me
I gaze upon this festive feast
and start tugging on my leash
Breaking the chain from which I came I am free to fly free

Moving on throughout the town I enter in a pub
I think of why these mortals blessed yet steady in their wake
Far from statues they all be yet yearning for a dream
They drink to dream and sleep to work and wonder why they're ill
But nobody is forcing them to wear horns and a tail
I say hey why do all the guys cower in their clothes

while men of gold bask in bold glamour on the town
He looks, his eye begins to wander up and down the room. Then side to side and back to me before he began to speak.

Don't you know about the boy who didn't earn his keep? They kicked him out and there he starved waiting in the street.

Why be chained upon the ground when dreams keep you afloat

You got wings boy it seems you've left us with no choice. The proclamation guarantees worth for those who work.

But I am not a selfish man I will not serve the king

In this town you kill yourself faster every week

Atop the tower I now sit

These men of old they grow so bold

Yet weak is what they choose

You cannot fly if you don't try or if you wear your chains

They sleep in cages tonight.

Morning I return to the spot I like to yearn, and gaze upon the meadow

Again it be returned it seems the faces from before

They both laugh and stretch their arms flapping with glee

I hurry down for now is now

A companion for the meek

Shouting out I yell out loud

You must first run to fly

They look at me with daggers in their eyes.

You dare mock my precious chains of which I worked so hard to buy? If I fly you know I'll die my chain will be my plummet. I'll burn your wings if you ever speak about my chains again.

Joshua Gordon
Ms. Trigg



GRADE 9 WINNER

"Fear"

Do not love me.
Instead, embrace the resistance when you proclaim my name.
Tremble at my wake.
Cry at my sight.
Run at the sound of my footsteps.
Cower of paranoia at the tip of my blade.
Do not love me.
Where love takes precaution, fear roams free.
Where love ends, fear remains everlasting.
Love makes a king careless, leaving his kingdom vulnerable,
but fear - she lives in his heart for the protection of his people.
Where love drags a strong man down,
fear pulls him to his edge.
Do not love me.
I desire to be your only source,
the murky water you drink with your tail tucked between your legs,
Let shame wash over you when you wander back to me.
Your love will run dry.
Your heart will shrivel,
and as a new is grown there will be no space for me.
But if you fear me,
I will remain engraved in your thoughts ,
Eating at your psyche .
Engorging my gluttony on your unease.
Submerged in the blueprint your heart must follow to feel whole -
a piece of you,
a chunk of you,
the better side of you,
the stronger half of you.
Do not love me .
Love will pass.
Fear me and I will live forever.

Jada Lawrece Ashun
Ms. Reynolds

GRADE 10 WINNER

"Strike"

Stinging fissures divide my world as you collide with the flora beneath my feet, your magic feat unknown to fleet of men and mammal alike. Statues entice your entropy and once you meet us little I'd gathered from your arrival, for the as the fickle fingers of finite physics fated, you flee the foreground of our filly dreams. Only to return, once more you shatter my mind, many find the time to seek out your divine line of cosine collision comparable only to colossus cathartics, and yet less and less understand the mess your detriment delivers. The world shakes under your stake, and yet we know so little of you.

I believe it is a beautiful thing, your decorative dance that defects the desolate depiction of what was, you cover my words in a light unbound and only until you decide do you leave. The world is not merely a play thing to you, but rather you are a play thing for us. Intertwined with copper rings your wings lose flight and wane of wax depicts a poor souls harbor less collapse.

You succeed in all you can, and gone you vanish as if the goal all along was to simply misconstrue us from the true paths we seek.

You are a beautiful flicker in a world of finches, and I will always find time to seek you

GRADE 11 WINNER

"¿Cómo soy yo?"

Yo soy Bonita, organizada, y limpia. Yo soy alegría también. No soy enojada y triste. Tampoco soy feliz. Me gusta el arte y el mundo. Me gusta mi familia. No me gusta la escuela. No me gusta la doctora y tampoco me gusta ducha frio

Me encanta mi familia. Yo soy yo

(English translation)

I am me

I am pretty, organized, and clean. I am joyful too.

I'm not angry or sad.

I'm not happy either. I like art and the world. I like my family. I don't like school. I don't like the doctor, and I don't like cold showers either. I love my family.

I am me!

**Stacey Chicas
Ms. Brill**

GRADE 12 WINNER

“When will Spring Come?”

Groundhog Day passes.
 Does the groundhog see his shadow?
 Heck yeah, it does. Spring is coming soon.
 We SPRING forward an hour, nights should be-
 gin to turn to day.
 After 32-degree weather the entire winter,
 I'm so excited to finally feel warm.
 Or so I thought.
 Weeks pass.
 Then, May, the highlight of spring.
 Instead of slipping into shorts,
 I'm out in three layers of clothing. -23 degrees in
 spring. The birds still haven't migrated back.
 Darkness lingers, despite daylight savings coming
 and going.
 What is going on?
 Spring was supposed to be beautiful
 Colorful, joyful, and warm.
 The news broadcasts the worldwide confusion.
 Why is it always so dark out?
 Spring was supposed to bring Easter baskets and
 egg hunts,
 And the conclusion of schools.
 I turn on CNN to fill my empty apartment,
 Hearing Anderson Cooper's voice:
 "NASA is currently researching what could be
 happening.
 They aren't sure at the moment, but they hope
 to... what in the world?"
 Beep... beep... beeeeeeeeeeeep.
 And just like that
 Light!

Looking out my window, I see the birds returning
 and flowers blooming.
 The kids are outside, searching for Easter eggs,
 Their parents giddily following behind.
 This is the spring I was waiting for! And it only
 took until May.
 I go outside, glad to feel the warm sun rays on my
 arms and legs.
 Smiling and laughing, I spot a garden of roses
 and go down to sniff them.
 They smell divine, and bees fly through the blos-
 soms, collecting pollen.
 Finally, it's 7 PM, and as on schedule, the sun
 begins to set.
 Time for sleep.
 Just as I drift off, something comes over me:
 "You can't go out on a lie."
 I wake up, realizing...
 It's 11 AM. The room is so dark I can't even see
 past the clock.
 I'm left with only my thoughts and the annoying
 beeping noise I keep hearing.
 What's that?
 "We need your permission to pull the plug."
 What plug?
 Sobs rack my body as I hear a whisper of agree-
 ment.
 Everything goes black.
 And just like that, I realize:
 Spring came... but not for me.

OVERALL WINNER

"Beating"

Time moves so quickly
All these steps ahead that I don't see or know and
maybe I won't ever know
And I'm sitting at my TV screen and I'm seeing all
these teens and suddenly I'm aging and I'm sixteen,
no I'm twenty,
Thirty,
Forty,
Fifty
Fifty
Sixty
Eighty
Dead.
And maybe when they lay me to rest they'll come to
visit my bones, for a time at least
Maybe they'll place flowers and sing hymns hoping
to god there's a god out there I can plead innocence
to but nobody's innocent so I won't try
And maybe I'll play a game of poker with my deity
and I'll lose just to stare up at my patron saint from
hell and wonder why all that life I had is stuck up
there in a small wooden box with hymns humming
its exterior to rot
And maybe I'll find nothing
And my bones, they will turn to dust
And my family, they will join me in beds beside the
Earth's core in a different yard in a different city
halfway round the world, because there are people
more important than me they wish to sleep with.
God, they tell me there is meaning
Meaning in the depravity of death
And I believe them sometimes, when a note comes
from my cello and a word scribes from my hand
But the older I get, the more ladder rungs I climb
that fall from beneath me before I can ever grab
the next, the more I find things to be meaningless

The job these walls want me to have, the lab coat that's
too tight for my arms
The hammer too weak for its nail
The brain too slow for its work
All of it, eventually, gone
And I with it
But I've found there is a certain meaning to the mean-
ingless
A sort of excitement to the nothing
And maybe one day when I die and find everything
and absolutely damn all left behind I'll except that
Maybe I'll even find it fun
No brain to ruin my future, no coat to take credit for
my masteries
But that's a lot of maybe's, and I'm bored now, so I
think I'll let that rest in its own coffin till I join it one
day with a flower in my hand and chemicals pumped
into my corpse and an understanding that I've lived a
life, if ever so
And I'll except the meaning in the meaningless
Because I am Alan van der Sluis
A meaningless person, in a meaningless world, with
meaningless poetry written to no one but my mean-
ingless memories
I'm me
Fifteen
Sixteen
Twenty
Thirty
Forty
Fifty
Fifty
Sixty
Eighty
Dead.
And that's enough.
Right?

Alan van der Sluis
Mrs. Kaldahl

GRADE 9 WINNER

"Garden Endings"

The flowers died on Monday...

But I could already tell from last Sunday
They started doing the little browning at the ends.
Which showed me signs of it becoming dead.

I watched it grow too.
I watched it sprout,
and for it to just die
was something me and my friends didn't talk about.

When buying it, I thought
it was gonna grow
into a fruit or something beautiful like you.
But it withered and wilted
to the new person you became.

Withered and tired on the outside
and dead from what you were supposed to be instead.....

GRADE 10 WINNER

"Bird in the Glass"

A bird looking through the glass

I don't think I'm smart

But do stupid people think?
Do they think about this?

That doesn't make me smart
We laugh at the bird pecking the rock
The dog chasing his tail
The bird not seeing the glass

What makes them smarter?
What makes them stupid

If I'm to make a mistake
Please don't laugh
I'm only a bird not seeing the glass.

Darcy Rogers
Mr. King

GRADE 11 WINNER

"Flying Freely"

I wanted to spread my wings.
I wanted to fly freely in the sky like a bird.
My only wish was to feel the wind inside me.
With every step, I walked with hope,
I had to take hard paths, and walk without stopping.

All I wanted was to attain freedom,
To touch it,
To smell it,
And breathe it deeply into myself.

I wanted to fly freely in the sky like a bird.
My only wish was to feel the wind inside me.
In every step, there was a hope hidden,
I had to take hard paths, and walk without stopping.

Every day is a new hope,
I wanted to disappear in the sky like a bird.
I fear that one day, I might not reach my dreams,
That I might not be able to open my wings freely.
I will still run and never give up from my dreams,
I will still run, but I would never give up, I ran, I ran ...

GRADE 12 WINNER

"Morning"



when she wakes, begins the day, she's met with the violence of the morning light
sun rays undo the shadows that protect her eyes
stealing the safety of paused promises and paused goodbyes
now things must begin and die
arches must fall just as they rise
and like the moon promises the sun, a morning promises a night
sleep secures a rise
death says you were once alive
and in the end it will end and things will continue despite
this weight of the day presses upon her, does paralyze
but some beginning of an end shakes her, interrupts the self that finds no place and tells her to hide
her feet on the floor say i know i will fall
her eyes open say i know i will close
her back bending say i know i will ache
her heart beating say i know i will rest
and the weight begins to move from her chest
it warms and propels and is not looking for the best
only for the momentum of life with all its starts and its ends
which moves her, knows her, loves her, is indiscriminate
she is met with the violence of the day and meets the kindness of its light

RubyLynn Jefferson-Maloney
Ms. Bentley

OVERALL WINNER

"Thoughts From a Waiting Room"

Lost In My Thoughts
 Waiting room chairs
 The most uncomfortable
 Worn cushions
 From those who sat before me
 I am sitting in this silent waiting room
 But the clock is Tick

Tick
 Ticking

And my foot is Tap

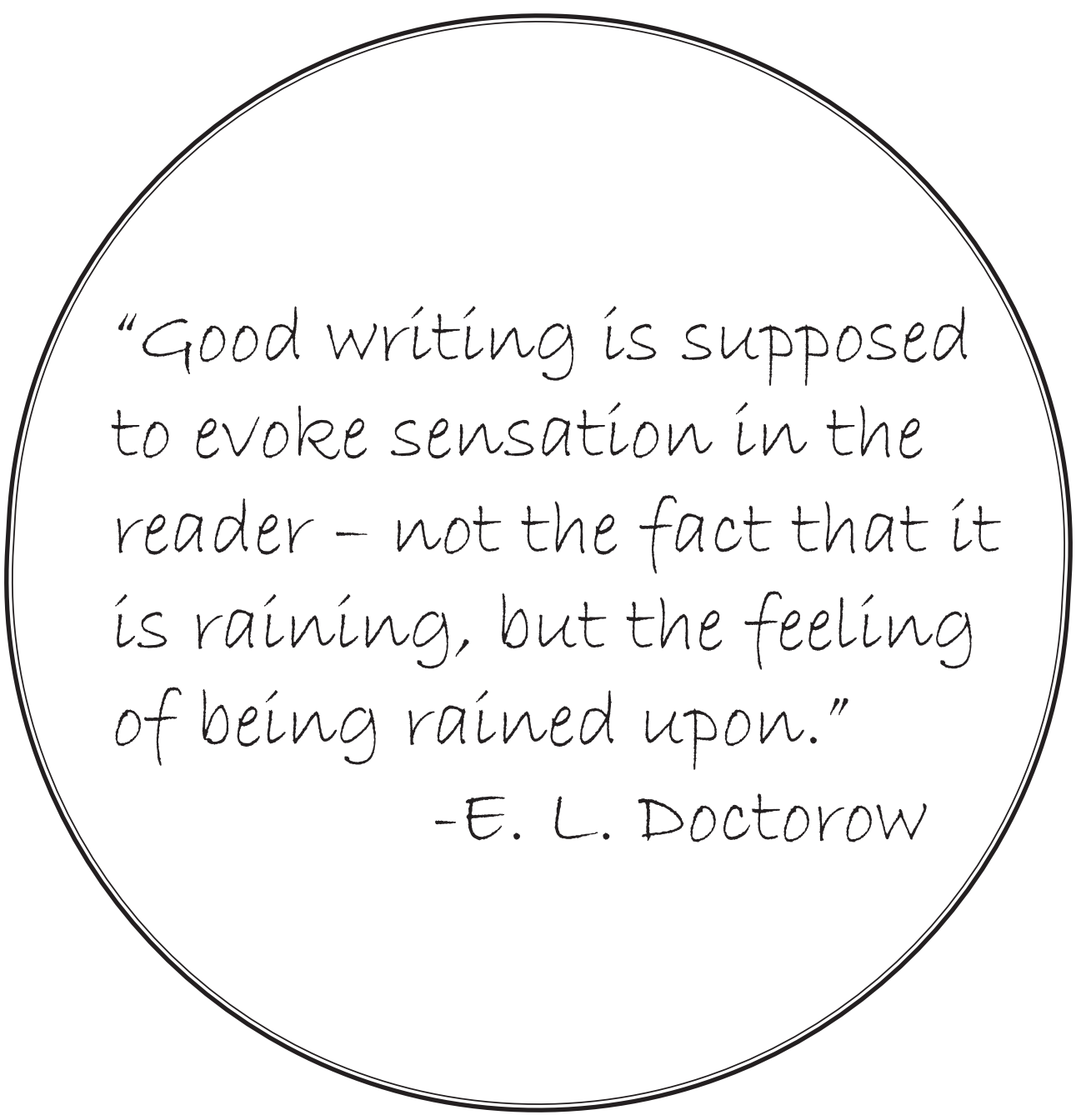
Tap
 Tapping

Nothing to do
 I can only think
 And get lost in my thoughts
 I Am Alone
 Nobody is at the desk
 Nobody is beside me
 To my left ... To my right
 Nobody to comfort me
 I am alone
 What I Could've Been
 When I was young I wanted to be an artist
 Now I'm sitting here just thinking
 What else could I be doing?
 I could have been an athlete
 A guitarist
 A good student
 Maybe even smart?
 But nope.
 I am sitting here
 In this silent room
 Doing absolutely nothing

A Waste of Hope
 They all believed in me
 My parents
 My siblings

My aunts and my uncles
 My friends
 They had hope in me
 To do what I love
 But what do I love anymore?
 I truly don't even know.
 I Am Still Alone
 Nobody is at the desk... still
 Nobody is beside me... still
 To my left ... To my right
 Nobody is here to comfort me... still
 I am alone
 Who I Am
 Who even am I?
 Am I happy?
 Am I successful?
 Am I smart?
 I hear my name called
 And I remember who I am
 I Am No Longer Alone
 I stand up
 And I remember
 Why I am in the waiting room
 I am here so I am not alone
 The Waiting Room
 What is this waiting room for?
 Happiness?
 Success?
 Knowledge?
 Nope.
 Simply for my time to come around.
 My time to let it all happen.

Jillian Organek
Ms. Songey



"Good writing is supposed to evoke sensation in the reader – not the fact that it is raining, but the feeling of being rained upon."

-E. L. Doctorow

"Poetry is the rythemical
creation of beauty in
words"

-Edgar Allan Poe

Elementary Poet Laureate

Maddie Tarre

Maddie Tarre is a fifth grader at MVCS whose favorite subject is language arts, especially writing. She has a nine year old brother and a one year old dog named Rocky. Rocky is named after Rockville, Md where she got the dog. Maddie is a foodie who loves tasting food from around the world. Her favorite type of food to try is Asian. She has played soccer all her life and lives on the same street as her best friend. She got the idea for her poem from thinking about all the things going on in the world right now and she wanted to write about the good people in the world.

Dr. John Brown Creativity Award Elementary

Loretta Shapiro Staley

Loretta Shapiro Staley is a 5th grade student at Charles Barrett Elementary School. She loves to swim, write, and read in her free time. The movie Inside Out 2 was what she used as an example for the meaning of her poem "Be Loud". When one of the characters in the movie wasn't telling her friend how she felt, she was inspired to write the poem to remind people to speak up for themselves and share their feelings. Loretta loves poetry because it's fun and allows her to be free.

Secondary Poet Laureate

Johnna-Averi Brooks

Johnna-Averi Brooks is an 8th grade student at Francis C. Hammond Middle School. She is spirited, outgoing, hardworking, and dependable. Her attention to detail in her classes is an attribute that will carry her far in life! She is a member of the school's TV media team and brings the morning announcements to her peers with enthusiasm!

Dr. John Brown Creativity Award Secondary

Ruby Lynn Jefferson-Maloney

Ruby Lynn Jefferson-Maloney is someone who follows her passions above all and her writing consistently reflects this creativity. Whether it is in unique and wonderfully written essays in English class, short stories of her own making, or the poetry you see here, RubyLynn marches to the beat of her own drum and inspires those around her to do the same. She graduates this year from ACHS and will doubtlessly continue her creative endeavours in the future!

Acknowledgements

Elementary Poetry Liaisons:

Ms. Jennifer Landis, Charles Barrett Elementary School

Ms. Linda Berry, Cora Kelly School for Math, Science, and Technology

Ms. LaTrania Martin, Douglas MacArthur Elementary School

Ms. Jonea Mathis, Ferdinand T. Day Elementary School

Ms. Alana Stratton, George Mason Elementary School

Mrs. Krystal Gray, James Polk Elementary School

Mr. Brionne Johnson, Jefferson-Houston K-8 School

Ms. Michelle Nettleton, John Adams Elementary School

Mrs. Karrie Kay, Lyles Crouch Traditional Academy

Ms. Maria Fletcher, Mount Vernon Community School

Ms. Deanna Rohrer, Naomi L. Brooks Elementary School

Ms. Paschal-Gilmore, Patrick Henry Elementary School

Dr. Anne Smith, Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School

Ms. Molly Black, William Ramsay Elementary School

Secondary Poetry Liaisons:

Mr. Khris Hutson, Francis C. Hammond Middle School

Ms. Christina Martini and Mrs. Blanca Mata, George Washington Middle School

Mr. Matthew Ross, Jefferson-Houston K-8 School

Mrs. Glenda Narcisse, Patrick Henry K-8 School

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Thank you to all of our ACPS
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instruction in order for students to build, develop,
explore, and refine their literacy skills. We are able to
celebrate our students and hear their voices because
of your dedication to education day in and day out.
That work is critical to fulfilling our ACPS Strategic
Plan and our vision statement:

Equity for All: Empowering All Students to
Thrive in a Diverse and Ever-Changing World

