

An aerial photograph of a coastline at sunset. The sun is a large, bright, glowing orb in the upper right quadrant, casting a long, shimmering golden reflection across the water. The sky is filled with wispy, light-colored clouds. The land below is dark and silhouetted against the bright water and sky. The overall mood is serene and majestic.

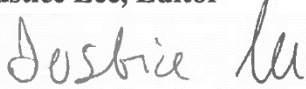
GENESIS

SPRING 2014

The spring 2014 Genesis magazine showcases the best of the Bellows Free Academy's students' literary work. We received hundreds of poems and short stories which were slowly whittled down to only 83 poems. We are excited to present the 2014 edition of Genesis magazine, and hope that you, the reader, enjoy reading the magazine as much as we enjoyed creating it.

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Rear Cover: CeLynn Siemons

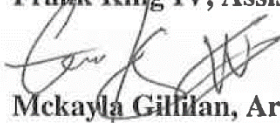
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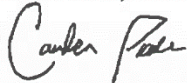


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**Mckayla Gillilan**  
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**Tanner Benoit, Awards**



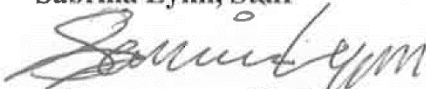
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# High School Poetry

## First Place

**Hearts Swell Devotion** by Colynn Gillilan  
Grade 10

Her hand rests upon her cheek  
And with her eyes she surely sweeps  
The frozen ground for loves preferred.  
She speaks to you not one word.  
Her eyes will soon catch sight of him and  
Her heart will swoon in devotion,  
While you sit with eyes cast down.  
She'll look at you but only frown.  
If loves sweet whispers only reached  
The calm resilience of your cheeks  
The downcast smiles would surface quick,  
And with new found joy your heart would tick.  
You'd throw him out the door.  
Yet the foul truth it still resides;  
She'll always cast your love aside  
And play it as a simple joke.  
So on your words you only choke –  
Be done with fierce love confessions;  
It seems a fool thing to mention  
How your love is more than his  
For she already knows it is.  
Does she care? I think not.  
She'll only leave your heart to rot.  
Alone on doorsteps, never knock  
For entry to her heart of rock.  
"Leave I must, for you see,  
For now here he is waiting for me,"  
Her voice laced with such melody  
You nod your head to remedy  
The aching in your heart,  
And just before you fall apart;  
Loves sweet lips grace your rosy cheeks  
But with a tick your heart will beat  
To fast paced tunes of horse's feet.  
She looks at you and smiles sweet  
"I always see you with a frown,

It hurts me so to see you down,  
So just this once I'll try and see,  
All your love's sweet mystery."  
With her final words, she bids adieu,  
And now your heart's left to swoon.  
With that swipe of her tender lips  
You'll always know she's never his.

# Second Place

**Whacked Out** by Sabrina Stewart

Grade 11

What's up home slice?  
My peers have raging hormones  
While Korea is nuking people  
Our teachers come from the flaming pits of hell  
"F's" are thrown like baseballs  
While the dragons light up the night  
Gravity loses its grip and we get closer to space  
The shampoo of failure pours over us  
Like love on a corn dog  
And the question we all wonder is  
"How did Bob get up the tree?"

# Third Place

**Guernica by Pablo Picasso** by Victoria Brown  
Grade 10

The world is dark, a blanket shrouding the sun.  
We came into this battle. Knowing we would fight as one;  
Around me, lives falter, their light put out,  
The death of my brothers fills my cold heart with doubt.

I watch their dead eyes, knowing they'll never again see  
The rise of the sun, the breezy swaying of a tree  
I become lost in myself, and forget what's around me--  
Distraction is my ticket away from this agony.

When the blade clears my chest, I let out a cry  
It burns, and it bleeds; is this how we die?  
The ground is hard, and sticky with blood  
My horse hits beside me with a thud.

I take up my sword, broken from my fall  
And let loose a mighty battle call  
For if this is my end, if this is where I'll be beat  
Let them remember my incredible feat!

I stagger up on wobbling legs  
And search for the courage some find in a keg;  
The air is thick with dust, choking my throat and wetting my eyes  
This, I think to myself, is how a brave man dies!

# Honorable Mentions

**A Drive on a Snowy Evening** by Tanner Benoit  
Grade 11

I don't drive daringly, at least not much.  
I try to always pay attention and such.  
Spring sprung leaving roads a mess.  
I hit the brakes that's all I confess  
I never saw the bunny bouncing under my tire.  
It was an accident; are you calling me a liar?  
The ba dum dum crunch was all I could hear.  
So this is my apology, it's not so sincere, but  
I'm sorry kids, there's no Easter this year.

**A Lunch Time Ballad** by Ben Tague  
Grade 11

## Part One

It's really bugging me  
That thing between her teeth  
I really want to tell her,  
Staring back at me

It's right there  
If I moved my hand I'd touch it  
It makes me want to quiver  
The way it stares at me

Though I can't avoid that pretty smile,  
That's all my eyes care to see  
That gross, dangly... Piece of cheese?  
Just staring back at me.

We've been talking twenty minutes  
How can she not feel  
That mangled piece of something  
Looking back at me.

## Part two

I hope he does not see this  
This thing that bothers me  
For you see at breakfast something got caught  
And now it will not flee



I hope he doesn't see it  
Oh no, am I smiling?  
I really cannot help it  
It's that way he looks at me.

Maybe if I close my mouth  
And wiggle around my tongue  
I can get this thing to budge  
And no longer bother me.

Why will he not speak?  
He's just staring at me  
Oh no, I think he sees it  
This gross thing stuck on me

**All I Am** by Loren Bourne  
Grade 10

I thought I was a boat, and you were my sea.  
I thought I was the child, and you were my giving tree.

I thought I was a drinker, and you were my shot glass.  
I thought I was the teacher, and you were my class.

I thought I was a sinner, and you were my saint.  
I thought I was the artist, and you were my paint.

I thought I was a star, and you were my sky.  
I thought I was the hello, and you were my goodbye.

I thought I was a flower, and you our were my sun.  
I thought I was your only, and you were my number one.

But I was never your boat, and you are not my sea.  
All you are is you,  
And all I am is me.

**Barbie** by McKayla Gillilan  
Grade 12

I still remember my Barbie cake, it was something my gram would bake.  
The bottom was big pink dress, It was perfect and nothing less.  
In the middle was a Barbie doll, but I don't remember playing with her at all.  
Apple bobbing now came next,  
This is before people could text.

**Barbie Girl** by Liam Sweeney  
Grade 11

It seems that you're always on my mind these days.  
Everything about you fills my head with images of your  
Face, complexion, smile, laughter, body, your everything.  
I can barely put it in words the way I'm feeling. When we part,  
It must be like when a dog watches his owner walk out of the door,  
and all the dog can wonder is when he'll be back, or when we  
Will see and talk to each other again. It seems obscene to say  
that you're all I need in my life right now, but it's true. You're  
Perfect for me, and I would do anything for you.  
Whoops, song is over. Next one now;  
I'm a Barbie girl, in a Barbie world...

**Be Strong Live Strong** by Tanner Benoit  
Grade 11

Every day, it destroys lives, closing doors.  
No one thinks that it could be me until its yours.  
Maybe it comes from a sunburn or just one smoke.  
Whatever the case, it's never a joke.  
Once it's there it only gets worse.  
Before you know it you're in a hearse.  
Within days the infection spreads.  
If it hits the brain you drop dead.  
One cell that creates too many copies...  
If you listen hear the cell say you can't stop me.  
Whoever you are, preacher, lawyer, or dancer.  
Do yourself a favor and watch out for cancer.

**Bedroom Blues** by India Hoover  
Grade 10

Oh my what a mess!  
It causes so much stress.  
I turn and stare,  
Normally I wouldn't care.

But this means no friends,  
Until I make amends.  
No fun to be had  
Which really makes me sad.

But my mother is right,  
My room is a pitiful sight.

Books on the floor,  
Bras on my door.

Dirty pants across the chair  
My rug covered in dog hair.  
So many shoes which do as they please,  
And tissues probably riddled with disease.

Makeup scattered across my vanity  
My room is covered in insanity!  
I'll clean it later or maybe never,  
I'll see my friends next weekend...whatever!

**Being Great** by Binny Singh  
Grade 10

How do you know when someone is great?  
All Michael Jordan did was play basketball for a really long time,  
And win six championships, was greatness in his fate?  
Maybe, but maybe not. But we can all agree there was no one better in his prime.

Mahatma Gandhi was also great.  
He fought for Independence, until finally achieving his goal.  
He even stopped eating for the cause, resulting in a loss of weight.  
Gandhi was great, AND pure in soul.

We all want to be great.  
But how will we know when we get there?  
Guess we'll just have to wait.

**Best Friend** by McKayla Gillilan  
Grade 11

She was a lazy girl, but she was my best friend.  
When my heart was broke, she helped me mend.  
When she heard a tear from my cheek,  
she let me know because she'd speak.  
I'd look up to see her grinning green eyes,  
slowly but surely it would end my cries.  
I will never forget her beautiful face,  
always poised with such royal grace.

I remember how I lay in bed,  
while playfully she would butt my head.  
On my pillow is where she liked to sleep,  
I was counting Kallys instead of sheep.

In the morning I'd wake to her beautiful loud purr,  
And reach up to pet her fur.  
Forever we would take turns to talk,  
not even paying attention to the clock.

Yes she was lazy, round, and fat,  
but now I realize my best friend was my cat.

R.I.P Kally  
1/04/03 - 9/27/13

**Bitter Heartbreak** by Taylor Hyer  
Grade 11

The look on her face said it all.  
Her sky blue eyes turned to a fiery red.  
She clenched her fists into a tight ball.  
All she could think about was knocking him dead.

She felt a raging passion in her heart.  
He said he was sorry, but she didn't care.  
The love of her life just tore her apart.  
She wanted to shatter him and make everything fair.

He knew they weren't meant to be.  
There wasn't anything she would do to make him stay.  
It took her some time to see,  
That she liked his brother better anyway.

**Bubbles** by Tanner Benoit  
Grade 11

Today at the fair I won my first goldfish.  
It was what I wanted, I got my wish.  
I watched him swim in his circle bowl almost all night  
When I fell asleep I hoped Bubbles was all right  
When I woke everything was wet  
Where's Bubbles, does he need a vet?  
In my sleep I must have knocked his bowl  
And all his water leaked out the hole!  
On the floor was my motionless friend  
To wash him away there was no rush  
I went over to the toilet and he went flush.

**Contradictions** by Victoria Brown  
Grade 10

The Beatles suck?  
You're right, they're just considered the most influential band of all time.

Titanic is a dumb movie?  
It did win only 11 Academy Awards.

Marilyn Monroe was fat?  
Yes, that's why she was a sex symbol of the 60's.

Baseball is a boring sport?  
Yet it's called America's pastime...

You hate people?  
But, you're a person.

Sometimes, I just don't get it.

**Cookies** by Justice Lee  
Grade 11

Eggs, sugar, flour, chips  
BAM!  
Form it,  
Then put that \$!& in the oven and wait,  
Frothing at the mouth,  
With an animalistic glint in the eye,  
Nostrils flaring like a wolf's who just caught a scent,  
Foaming at the mouth as if that same wolf were rabid,  
Waiting.  
Watching, for that damned timer to count down,  
Just one more minute  
While it looks like it's mocking you  
In your state of extreme ravenousness,  
Until finally,  
Inevitably,  
It counts down...  
5... 4... 3...  
And you're there before it can beep,,  
Furious it couldn't bend the fabric of space and time  
Just so you could taste your sweet creation  
One minute earlier.  
But when you lay your eyes upon your beautiful invention,  
All is forgotten

And you carefully take one from where it was born,  
Let it slither onto your plate,  
And burn your mouth because you're  
A dumbass and didn't wait for it to cool.

**Crash** by Justice Lee  
Grade 11

Coming home from my grandparents  
Was never any fun;  
We'd take the car, never fly,  
And drive until the day was done.

Sure I had a good time,  
And I imagine they did too,  
But a twenty-four hour car ride  
Was way too much to do.

I closed my eyes  
And waited for it to end  
Not knowing, not fearing,  
My life soon could be spent.

Out of nowhere some woman  
Came flying out of her lane,  
Drunk and nearly sleeping  
And absolutely insane.

She smashed into our car,  
And woke me from my nap;  
We went flying off the road  
And my nose broke with a snap.

When the dust finally settled  
And everyone was healthier,  
The lady paid out  
And we're twenty-grand wealthier.

**Da Bear** by Tanner Benoit  
Grade 11

It is a quiet walk in the woods.  
A slight warm wind blows and caresses my cheek.  
The sun dips down under the horizon.  
Leaving the air cool and moist.  
Down below the hill, the corn dances as if the whole field is in synchronization.

Then, the swift rustling of leaves and snapping of sticks  
Like flimsy bones gathers my attention.  
As a large pissed off bear hurdles down the trail heading right for me.  
I freeze like I'm in a movie and someone hit pause, I am stone without color  
The bear is inches from my face.  
His steamy breath rolls out of his nose  
Reeking of moldy corn and bad teeth.  
He stares in my eyes looking into my soul  
I'd have been dead if a bear could smell fear or urine.

**Details** by Emily Johnson

Grade 10

Inside the light is bright florescent, mimicking a hospital.  
A couple is crouched over the deep merlot counter.  
That red dress resting there, an open flame.  
That cigarette smoldering, a thick cloud.  
There's a bar tender, a hunched over turtle.  
That white hat, a ship in a sea of blonde.  
Then there's me, a dark shadow.  
That hat hanging over my brow, a shield.  
Politely sipping my coffee and observing.

**Dexter** by Amy Blair

Grade 11

So many sleepless nights,  
And hours wasted sitting on my ass.  
I'd flinch if someone turned on the lights  
And say "Only sixty episodes left!" with sass.

I could finish a season faster  
Than I thought was capable,  
But when it ended my life was a disaster.  
It was irreplaceable...

The series left me afflicted,  
I miss the blurred vision and Netflix glow,  
How dare you say I'm addicted!  
I shouldn't be emotionally attached to a TV show.

**Don't Judge Me** by Ali Gabaree  
Grade 11

Walking into the school,  
My head hung low,  
Nobody I could fool,  
To them I was the show.

Everybody just looked,  
Everybody gave me that stare.  
Judging me, I booked  
It to my locker as if I didn't care.

But I did care,  
Their opinions burning.  
Straight at me they stare,  
Whispering, my stomach churning.

Why must the world  
Be such a cruel place?  
Mean words swirled  
Giving the weak a chase.

People pressure.  
People judge.  
It seems they come together,  
You just try and trudge

Through life.

Some people fear heights,  
Others are scared of spiders.  
But me, it's not something that would bite.  
It's all those insiders, while I'm an outsider.

All the saints we see  
Are made of gold,  
People trying to be  
Them, trying to fit the mold.

But in the end  
We aren't saints at all.  
In the end we send  
All those around to stumble and fall.

Watch what you say



To those who surround you.  
Maybe the way  
They deal is to fall into tears.  
Maybe to them their fears  
Aren't spiders, or heights.  
Maybe to them their biggest fear

Is to be judged.

**Fallin'** by Amy Blair  
Grade 11

The broken glass catches my fall  
And the skin splits open  
Slowly at first and then all at once.  
A purple layer shows itself  
And disappears behind fatty tissue.  
The layers of my arm stare at me.  
Suddenly blood cells drown them  
In a sea of deep red.  
Uncontrollable bleeding  
Gushing from a tiny source.  
I feel like I'm being drained  
Of every last drop of liquid  
That makes me human.

**Fin** by Scott Bedell  
Grade 12

The room was dark,  
Nothing to be seen.  
But the noise,  
You could hear it.  
The crunching between jaws,  
The slurps and smacks.  
Flick. The light was on.  
And there lies the source of the sounds.  
My cat, looking  
At his feet,  
Lies Fin, in pieces, my hamster.

**Frustration** by Tanner Benoit  
Grade 11

Wake up in the morning and you're all I see  
Those curves so luscious stay away from me!  
I know you're always there, looking fine and waiting  
And I want a taste but still I'm debating  
If I run to you there's surely no way out  
Just one nibble and I'll be hooked no doubt  
But man there's nothing I can do  
Oreo, I am addicted to you!

**Glass Heart** by Naomi Flemmings  
Grade 11

When the glass fell,  
And the water splashed,  
A silence fell throughout  
The crowded room.

There I stood  
As still as stone,  
Soaking wet  
From drinks around.

The silence was like  
A void filled with fear  
That took the sight  
From all their ears.

The man departed  
Without a care  
But left behind  
A world I fear.

But from that world  
Was born anew  
A girl's life  
With a chance to be true.

The fear is numbed  
As the days have passed  
But it all comes back  
With the sound of glass.

**Grandmother** by Amy Blair  
Grade 11

You brimmed with beauty  
from the inside out.  
You had the same pretty face  
As when you were twenty.  
Only 4'10 with short, grey curls,  
A genuine smile  
And wrinkles that told stories.  
I could never have your strength,  
Your compassion for others, but  
I learned to be stubborn from you,  
To keep my head held high through everything  
And to laugh as much as possible.  
You brightened me  
With your beliefs, and your green thumb  
Your hand knit hats and mittens  
Kept me warm during the coldest months,  
And your love for nature shaped a part of me.  
When flowers bloom  
I think of you.

**Grape Jelly** by Justice Lee  
Grade 11

Last night I went downstairs  
To make myself a snack.  
I got the stuff together  
But much to my surprise,  
There was no peanut butter.

I had gone down  
To try some new jelly,  
And for the life of me  
I wasn't about to wait.

I unscrewed that cap  
And shoved my fingers in,  
Only to look up and see my mom,  
Staring. Just staring.

**Growth of the Heart** by Rebecca Cook  
Grade 10

A bulb,  
Freshly planted  
In some barren stretch  
Of the heart.

Against all odds it grows,  
Pushing past the weeds,  
Up above the brush.

Never stopping.

Forming a strong stem  
With many protective  
Thorns  
Always growing.

To win at last  
And burst open  
In a pop of purple.

Petals stretch out,  
Basking in the warmth  
Of having finally blossomed.

Welcoming the buzz  
Of friendly bees,  
The hum of birds,  
A wonderful whisper of wind.

A glowing beacon  
In a field of crushed  
Dreams.

**Happiness** by Hudson Elledge  
Grade 10

Why must beauty be so defined  
By the fake mask of perfection  
Driving even the nicest of women into hysteria  
Why can't we be happy?

Why must a man be tall and fit  
Have a perfect chin and perfect body

Smell nice and be kind  
Why can't we be happy?

Why must she ignore him?  
Disregard him like some old toy...  
Is she better than him?  
Has she reached perfection?  
Or has her mask blinded her, confused her  
Why can't we be happy?

Why must he mock and make fun of her  
"She is such a pig, so ugly"  
Is she weird, a nerd?  
Or are you blind?  
Too blind to notice who she is  
Too blind to care  
Why can't we be happy?

**Heights** by Adi Toof  
Grade 11

My fingers ache as I grip the wall.  
The harness begins to cut into my thigh.  
All I can think is I am going to fall  
and inevitably die.

My vision begins to blur  
and my heart beats in my ears.  
My body is filled with terror,  
As I try to overcome my biggest fear.

Heights are my kryptonite,  
they make my skin crawl.  
No matter how tight  
My grasp, I know I will fall.

**Heights** by Amy Blair  
Grade 11

I climb to the top of the tallest tree  
And feel dread at the view above.  
I close my eyes so I can't see,  
But what if the wind gives me a shove?

Legs shaking uncontrollably,

My fingers slip but hold on.  
I freeze on a weak branch hopelessly  
waiting for help but my friends are all gone.

One wrong move and I will plummet to the ground.  
Smash into the earth in a puddle of red.  
I sit and hear nothing but the unpleasant sound  
Of fear shrieking in my head.

**Her** by Hudson Elledge  
Grade 10

She walks like a rabbit hopping around  
Full of joy and happiness  
Nothing could ever knock her down  
Little do we know her emptiness

She walks alone, no one by her side  
A scratch, a scrape  
Upon her hide  
All she wants is to escape

She falls and falls deeper into insanity  
Everything has its toll  
She has lost all her humanity  
Down and down the rabbit hole

**Homework** by Henry Reinecke  
Grade 11

In my stomach there is a feeling.  
Like in front of the Scaffold kneeling.  
I am having trouble breathing.  
And start sweating.

I wish to be invisible  
And not feel so miserable,

Being in this class.  
The teacher walking  
Around with a magnifying glass.

He is looking for the work that was clearly defined  
But I have not done the task, which was assigned.

**I Open The Door** by Loren Bourne  
Grade 10

I opened the door to the closet  
Where I knew they were hiding  
Lurking, waiting in the shadows  
My monsters, my demons, my  
Sweet sweet arsonists  
that burn down the walls  
Along my morals and around  
My now-charred soul.  
They give me tainted kisses  
And intertwine their icy fingers  
Around mine.  
They take me for long,  
Winding walks along the  
Edge of humanity  
When I slipped towards the edge  
They watched me as I dragged  
My broken and bruised  
Body up again  
They soaked me in kerosene  
And handed me the match.  
They put the knife in my palm  
And pressed it against my beating heart.  
They watch as I fail to do their bidding  
To take the final leap of faith  
Towards an eternity with them  
In hell.  
They're getting impatient  
I feel them crawling under my skin  
Lighting the match and  
Sharpening their knife  
And forcing me to consent.

**I Wish I Could Swim** by Binny Singh  
Grade 10

From Nemo to Phelps they can all do one thing,  
Flap their arms and move through the water.  
Jealously sets in, oooh does it sting!  
They even make it look so easy, without even a spotter  
I wish I could swim, I really do.

Front-strokes and back-strokes fill the pool.  
I sit on the side admiring their skill.

If I could swim, I wouldn't feel like a fool.  
Maybe I should jump in, and experience the thrill!  
I wish I could swim, I really do.

No! I can't just jump in, I'd splash and squeal.  
People have tried to teach me, I've even gone to a school!  
But every time I try, I get hit with the same spiel,  
"Binny get in the water you're taller than the pool!"  
Oh I wish I could swim, I really do.

**Jesus on the Pull** by Lucas Wells

Grade: 10

What would Jesus throw?  
Would he throw a holy hammer that soars like the most majestic birds?  
Would he throw a sacred scoober that dives straight into the ground like a frightened mole?  
Perhaps he enjoys the blessed backhand,  
Or maybe even the impractical but cool theological thumber.  
Or is he more a huck it and pray for a roller kind of guy?

**Jim and Joe** by Christian Soychak

Grade 10

The little boy named Jim was not like other boys  
He sat alone most days with just his toys  
His favorite toy was Joe the crocodile  
But recently he hadn't seen him in awhile

And so he left to go and find his friend  
He looked and looked for days on end  
And after searching under sticks and rocks  
He found his friend inside his old toy box

**Just So You're Reminded** by Liam Sweeney

Grade 11

I'll never forget where I was when I heard  
the news that you had left us all;  
That moment of my life is set in stone  
and will never be eroded from my mind.  
Imagine, hearing that your best friend is  
gone, and will never come back.

We were buddies, you and I, and though our  
days together were cut short by an unimaginable  
fate that neither one of us could've been prepared



to meet, I still remember it all like it was yesterday.  
The sun shining on a warm spring day, as we  
played baseball together, just having some fun.  
The smell of the grass, hearing your laugh,  
I took it all for granted, and I wish that I hadn't.

They say never count your chickens before they hatch,  
and you were this egg of joy, laid on Earth by God,  
sent to bring positivity and friendship to those who needed  
it most, including me, and now I can't return the favor.  
If only I had known the type of pain that you were in,  
maybe I could've done more to help prevent this.  
You were my best friend, my buddy, my bro;  
and it tears me apart to know I'll never see you again.

Every day I sit and think how much different it  
might be if you were still with us today,  
but then I wonder how much better you're  
doing up there, no pain, just happiness.  
But nonetheless we all still miss you here,  
and wish that you didn't have to leave that way.  
We drive a big green tractor every summer for you,  
so when you're looking down you're reminded... we love you...

**Lily Pad Quarrel** by Rebecca Cook  
Grade 10

Sitting in the dewy grass  
They talk and laugh and love  
She takes a lily pad from the water's mass  
And puts it on above  
Her ear. "Look!" She calls  
"It's a fashion forward hat."

"I think," he said  
"You'd look better  
Laying nude in my bed.  
But instead you get wetter  
From that silly lily pad.  
Less is better, wouldn't you agree?"

Her response was harsh;  
"Well you'd look best  
Covered in the murky marsh.  
You'd be right at home with the rest  
Of those who can't hold their tongues.

They'll keep you company, but I will not."

"I was only poking fun!  
You have radiant beauty,  
And you're the only one  
I truly love. As such it is my duty  
To tell you this;  
You stink of pond water piss."

"Don't you dare come calling  
Unless you're more mature  
Or I think I might be falling  
Out of love." She stood unsure  
And then left him there,  
A lily pad in his hands.

**Loose** by Selena Marrier  
Grade 10

We say it's not all about the looks,  
But ladies let's be serious.  
They can't just be mysterious.  
The boys with the baseball hats,  
And bats that they flip and swing.  
All they seem to want is a fling.

Now, she's walking around, cocky and confident.  
It's funny though, because she is an accident  
I don't understand though why they like her better  
Probably because she only wears fishnets and a sweater.

Her skin is too loose  
But mine is not.  
So come over here  
Because I've got a spot.

Just kidding, I'm not that way  
But that's okay.  
I'm not into flings  
Just to make you all feel like kings.  
I'm not one to sleep around  
I usually just go play on the playground.

It shows me what kinda of guy you are.  
Yeah, you might catch, hit and run  
But I'm not sticking around for fun.

**Losing Someone Always Hurts** by Taylor Hyer  
Grade 11

My brother kissed his forehead.  
He said his skin was like ice.  
His cold, unmoving body looked peaceful.  
He was pale; the life sucked from him.  
He looked nice in a suit though.  
I'd never seen him in a suit.  
Everyone recited prayers I had never heard before.  
We hugged his wife and his six children.  
I hugged my grieving grandmother.  
I tried to stay strong for her sake,  
so I did my best not to cry in front of her.  
Her eyes were a burning red.  
They buried him with his Red Sox hat.  
He was a die hard fan.  
I couldn't stop myself from crying.  
I barely ate anything the next few days.  
How could I eat when  
his plate was empty?

**Lost** by Sean Stergas  
Grade 11

These woods are deep  
There is no path to follow;  
It's my choice and it seems natural to go my own way,  
Rather than following in someone else's steps.  
These woods are untouched and unaltered by man;  
Which is rare to find these days.  
Cherish their deep and vivid colors.  
Be lost in their pure and irreplaceable peacefulness,  
Be careful to listen to,  
The snapping trees and the rustling of leaves in the wind.

**Love Me To Death** by Colynn Gillilan  
Grade: 10

Death by Fire,  
Death by heat.  
Mix of wires,  
Growing weak.

Drowning in a  
Dark abyss,

Lost Atlantis  
Deadly Fish.

Broken on the floor of life,  
Wasted dreams  
Wasted strife.

Lie amongst  
The butterflies.  
Broken wings  
Broken stride.

Love me tender,  
Love me meek  
I need a defender  
Every week.

As long as love  
Is heart's desire  
Throw me through  
The burning fires.

**Mans Best Friend** by Amy Blair  
Grade 11

A friendship is formed  
Between a black curly mammal  
Looking for food and affection  
And a lonely human  
With a space at the end of her bed.

**Mirror** by Melissa Cote  
Grade 11

The mirror I look in every morning is  
When I get to see you.  
My friend who smiles back at me.  
Though your silence is deafening.  
My conscious tells me you're real,  
But yet you have no soul.  
I can't feel you,  
Yet I can see you.  
How can you be in my future,  
When you only show up in the mirror?

**My Friend** by Melissa Cote  
Grade 11

My dear absent friend,  
They told me,  
The fall of the year,  
You were to go somewhere,  
But you disappeared longer than expected.  
Forgetful, alone, stuck in the woods,  
With the whisper of trees  
To what seem your only company.  
Peace and quiet when you went away,  
Like you left town high and dry, my dear friend.  
The dark tall trees lurking over,  
The jolts of pain locked in your legs,  
The lonesome dusky night end to end.  
The intense moon as your only light,  
To find your way out of the dark,  
Look for the light,  
As nature is your friend,  
Your lostness will soon come to an end.  
I will see your smiling face once again,  
My dear friend.

**My True Fear** by Lucas Wells  
Grade 10

I've been looking at the same blank page for about an hour now  
I can't think of anything to write  
I don't have a soap box, hell I don't even know what that means  
He told us to write about something that is important to us  
I'm a teenage boy you would think this would be easy  
I should have enough opinions to piss off every individual in the class at least once.  
But I don't  
I don't seem to care about anything  
That's the most troubling part of this all  
Why don't I care?  
Why can't I form opinions about the smallest of problems  
I've always had this problem, I can't seem to make myself choose a side  
And why is that?  
Am I afraid of other people looking at me differently for my stances on life issues?  
Or is it because I'm afraid of confrontation  
As soon as I say I agree with so and so it will be out there forever  
What they turn out to be the bad gut?  
Could I live with myself knowing I sided with a monster  
It's none of the above.

I'm afraid to choose a stance because that means I'm now an adult  
The minute I have to stop and think about who I want as President is the minute my childhood is  
Gone, gone forever!  
That scares the living hell out of me  
I'm not ready to give that up  
Not just yet.

**Not So Blushing Bride** by Rebecca Cook  
Grade 10

Two golden rings  
Broken dreams  
Falling endlessly  
Into the depths  
Gone in a  
Splash  
All is done  
Love is broken  
No more promises  
No more kisses  
No more smiles  
No more  
No more  
No more.  
Too many lies  
Too little time  
Death  
Does  
Not  
Do  
Us  
Part

**One Drink** by Selena Marrier  
Grade 10

We were laughing and joking about the day that had past.  
Neither of us saw him, he was going way to fast.  
The lights in our eyes like the stars of the sky,  
God please help us, we are not ready too die.  
My seatbelt was on, locked into place  
That it didn't help the jolt to my face.  
With a sound like thunder, a crash and a boom,  
We flipped over and over, feeling impending doom.  
I cried to my friend, but she couldn't make a sound.  
Warm blood flowing down, my head spinning round.

There were sirens in the distance, and screams to help.  
But as they got closer, the cold was all I felt.  
Mom and Dad, I'm sorry for not being home.  
I'd rather be with you, than dying alone.  
When I slammed the door on you today,  
I never thought those were the last words we'd say.  
Never forget to tell those who are there  
How much you love them, how much you care.  
For one night of fun,  
But now I'm done.  
Because he didn't think  
Before he took that one last drink.

**Orion** by Justice Lee  
Grade 11

For all my life  
She'd been by my side,  
On my bed in the night,  
In the car on a ride,

I'd take her on walks  
Out in the snow,  
And over the rocks  
Across the river flow

I'd throw her a chew toy  
Down the back hill,  
Sneak her some pork loin  
When I'd had my fill,

But after fourteen short years  
It all came to end,  
What had happened brought tears:  
I'd lost mans' best friend.

**Pee** by Justice Lee  
Grade 11

I woke up  
From a deep slumber,  
Sensing a thirst  
And maybe some hunger.

Down to the kitchen  
I silently snaked,  
Not making a sound so  
No one was to wake;

I got to the room  
And turned on the light,  
But it was too late  
When I realized my plight.

In the darkness  
I barely could see,  
And in the confusion  
I stepped in some pee.

Left by my dog  
Who would foolishly drink  
Straight from the faucet  
In the bathroom sink,

But the dumb old beast  
Was confined to indoors  
During the night hours  
While everyone snores,

And with nowhere to pee  
She went on the floor,  
And made me wake my family  
From slamming the door.



**Peepers** by Christian Soychak  
Grade 10

All the little frogs  
Found down in the bog  
At the time of night  
When the stars shine bright  
Sit all together and sing their song,  
And though one alone may not be strong  
Together they form a symphony.  
All singing together in harmony,  
Why their song can be heard for miles around!  
Worthy of the finest theater in the round  
These frogs are most certainly keepers  
There's a really good reason that they are named peepers.

**Personal Happiness** by Kat Langlois  
Grade 10

I see people every day.  
People who in every way  
Are truly, honestly, happy.

But how?!  
I think to myself  
Is their life really great?  
Or does it just happen, like fate

I see people everyday  
I am curious so I stop and say  
How odd your life get this way?

What makes you beam when the sun climbs over the horizon?  
Did you listen to the commercial and switch to Verizon?  
Is it riches in which you delight?  
No? It has to be something! I'll get it right!

They shake their heads no so I try once more.  
I know the meaning of happiness I bet, I'm sure!

I bet it's a lover!  
Yes! One I'm about to uncover.  
It is a lover indeed!  
To find happiness, it's a companion you'll need.

I told them "I've figured it out!"

Now if you want title you better go scout.  
But then someone told me with or without,  
The meaning of happiness varies.

With each person there's something that captures their heart  
Whether it be a person, money, things or art  
So find what makes you feel blessed,  
Then you will have found true happiness.

**Politics. Money. Power.** by Gianna Trono  
Grade 10

I flip through the channels  
Trying to find a show I would enjoy  
I pick one and the animal cruelty ad plays.

As I stop and think about it more and more,  
I have come to the realization that this is reality.

The food we eat is beaten and tortured,  
Yet we still manage to eat that meat even though we know.

Than another thing comes across my mind,  
Society is screwed up in every way.

People always fighting to be rich and famous  
Thinking that it will make them happier.

Having surgeries to “cover” up flaws  
Hoping it will make them feel a little less insecure.

Almost everyone is fake,  
Trying to be better than someone below them.

Does it fill people with pleasure  
Watching other people suffer while they are on top?

What I have learned while living this luxurious life is that  
Every little detail in our lives is affected by these three things:

Politics. Money. Power.

**Questions** by Jacob Moore  
Grade 10

I know that I ask a lot of questions.  
It's just my nature to learn and ponder.  
I hope to, someday, make it my profession,  
Though some day it's an opportunity I'd squander.

I've been told to be quiet and stop asking things,  
If only because I'm getting on their nerves.  
But I can't resist seeing what another question will bring,  
Though I get nothing new at times, if memory serves.

"Who is this? What does that mean?  
Is that thing really what it seems?  
Why do we do this? When should it be done?  
Is there a way to do it that is more fun?"

All I ever say is questions, and it seems to make people tense.  
But I have to know the reasons, or nothing will make sense.  
I can't just perform things for no reason, that would be mad.  
But I'm not asking any questions that seems to make people glad.

**Remember the Moment** by Lucas Wells  
Grade 10

Do you remember  
When all of this made any sense?  
It feels so long ago.

We were both sixteen  
And full of love and beauty but  
I knew it would end.

When you're young who  
Cares? It was fun at the time.  
No regrets as they say.

**Sail Away** by Victoria Brown

Grade 10

She said "I want to sail away from here  
As did my brother,  
All he wanted was never to fear  
Heartbreak caused by another."

"The world's a cruel place  
To those who love,"  
She said.  
"He loved more than anyone, and we found him dead in his bed."

Her eyes are downcast, as a tear slides down her cheek.  
She's choked with sorrow, unable to speak.  
It makes me wonder, fills my young heart with doubt  
Leaves me to question what life is really about.

This world is beautiful, green grass and blue skies  
Yet despite this, each day, innocent dies.  
It makes her promise to never forget  
To live life to the fullest, so she'll feel no regret.

**Scramblin' Man** by Tanner Benoit

Grade 11

My alarm clock says it's eight  
Ten minutes to get ready or I'll be late.  
Moaning and groaning I slip into my jeans.  
My brains on autopilot if you know what I mean.  
I grab my bag and all my schoolwork.  
Whoever made school is truly a jerk.  
I'm flying doing 80 all the way there,  
I passed a few cops who gave me a scare.  
I pull in the parking lot and what do I see?  
No school on Sunday, oh silly me...

**Sins** by Ali Gabaree  
Grade 10

I awoke in a place not known  
No one around, all alone.  
The darkness closing in—  
Is this punishment for my sins?

Surely I must be in hell.  
Just ask and to you my soul I'll sell.  
The emptiness is closing in,  
For now I wish I had not sinned.

The wind blows with such a might  
I tumble down, impossible to fight.  
Falling down, tumbling to no end,  
I am broken, unable to mend.

I shoot up with a scream.  
Alas, it was all just a dream.

**Skiing With Friends** by Elizabeth Skerrett  
Grade 10

Skiing with friends  
On early morning days.  
With the hair of Ben  
Brighter than all the sun rays.

Snap snap, buckle in  
Not enough seats, we don't care  
In a Suburban, we just pack in.  
It's too cramped? Clear the air!

We ski like fools, falling in snow  
We land in a bank with one great poof.  
Fred drives like a fool, we all know  
But it's okay, just hold the roof!

Slip and slide down the roads  
Where are we? Who knows...  
Grab your skis and unload  
It's only fun when it snows.

**Skin** by Kat Langlois  
Grade 10

Commercials, TV shows, magazines, social media  
These all are ways to convince you  
That you shouldn't be comfortable in your own skin  
That you should be ashamed of what you have  
And want to change it

Why have your short brunette hair?  
That you love  
When you can have bleached, damaged long locks  
Do you like your face?  
Do you love your brown eyes?  
Your wide nose that your mom says is "so cute?"  
Your thin lips?

"Well you shouldn't!"-  
Society says  
Botox will make you prettier  
Make a man want to love you  
Make you feel better  
It will bring out the real you

Snow White skin is a thing of the past!  
Go put tanning oil on  
And bake in the 90 degree sunlight  
Sure you may get skin cancer  
But at least your skin looks tan

Are your boobs too small?  
No problem!  
There is surgery for that as well!  
You can make them as big as bowling balls and as hard as a rock

Did your doctor tell you that your weight is healthy?  
Guess again  
Throw "being healthy" out the window  
Anorexia or bulimia is the way to go

Society blinds you with models  
And remedies to make you  
*A better you*  
But it actually drives you further from yourself than you could go  
We get so wrapped up in the term  
"Bigger is better"

Healthy is not the concern anymore  
Being yourself isn't either

But you go ahead  
You go bake in the sun  
And get skin cancer  
You go have all of the surgeries money can buy  
Conform to society  
It's the only way  
The way to be beautiful

**Special Day** by Sean Stergas  
Grade 11

The candles were lit,  
And I was so happy.  
I had presents in my mitt,  
And got cards that were sappy.

I did my best to open the presents slow,  
But it was hard to contain my joy,  
All I want to do was go-go-go,  
I liked it fast because I'm a boy.

**Teachers** by McKayla Gillilan  
Grade 11

They tell me to ask a question if I'm confused.  
They complain when I don't understand.  
They complain when I don't pay attention in class.  
They complain when I don't do my homework.

Well teachers,  
I won't ask a question if you're going to give me attitude about it,  
It's not worth the fight.  
Don't complain about me not understanding...  
If I can't ask the question to clarify.  
Don't complain about me not paying attention in class,  
If you're going to talk all day.  
Don't complain about me not doing my homework,  
If you don't leave class time to do so.  
I have a job.  
I have house work.  
I need my free time.  
Remember I don't want to be here either.

**The Feeder** by Tanner Benoit  
Grade 11

I crack the window just enough to get the gun out.  
While the animals are in the rush to stuff their furry,  
And/or feathered faces with corn seed.  
I scope the feeder and lock on to the gray squirrel...  
Click, safety's off.  
I hold my breath and hold steady on the head.  
BANG! I see the squirrel stripped of its head and balancing skills,  
Wobbling on its two hind legs arms flailing trying to catch itself until.  
It steps backwards flailing its arms,  
It falls off the edge of the feeder into the twelve inch snow leaving a blood splatter on the feeder  
glass and a small red outline of a squirrel in the snow

**The Fight** by Tanner Benoit  
Grade 11

Two corners, red and blue.  
Touch gloves, back to my side  
Ref gets the ready. Go to war  
I approach the tall ripped gorilla man.  
Uppercut. His head flops back.  
Left hook. My cauliflower ear takes the hit  
Bam... right jab and a sliver of my skin below the eye opens,  
Red strength leaves the body  
Both of his tree trunk arms wrap around me  
I slam like a meteor into the canvas  
My head is ringing like a service bell  
Punches rain down on me like falling bowling balls  
I cover up and pray for mercy-  
An idea hits me harder than his strikes  
I kick off my opponent and spring to my feet  
I watch like a predator as he flies onto his back  
I leap onto him, legs across his chest both arms in between his-  
Pulling, struggling, running on fumes with relentless spirit  
His arm bending like weak metal into my pull  
Until flat on my chest my arms popping, adrenaline rushing  
I feel the fluttering of the bird wing hand,  
The quick tapping on my sweat marinated chest.  
The ref separates the warriors, one a millionaire,  
One bruised, tattered and worn.  
The ref raises the winner's hand and the crowd goes beserk  
One legend dies,  
Another is born.



**The Glimpse** by Jared Quick  
Grade 11

He tries to be normal  
He wants to fit in  
But comes off strange  
Maybe filled with sin  
If you take the time  
To look to see  
You may catch a glimpse  
You may try and perceive  
That it's true, that it's real  
Not make believe  
There's horror there's pain  
There's honor, there's pride,  
There's guilt and there's shame  
All of the feelings he'll hide  
Oh the pain never goes away  
No matter how hard he tries  
Now listen now hear  
The screams, the cries  
Tell me how was your glimpse  
Into the eyes of a soldier?

**The Little Wooden Plane** by Christian Soychak  
Grade 10

Little plane made out of wood  
Couldn't fly though wished he could  
Crafted out of oak and birch  
Dreamed to fly above his perch  
To feel the wind rush cross his spine  
And lift hi wings made out of pine  
Start up with his propeller  
And head into the interstellar  
Past the stars and moon and sun  
Fly up high to have some fun  
And glide around free to roam  
But in the end fly back home  
Little plane made out of wood  
Dreamed he flew and so he could

**The Sinner** by Kevin West

Grade: 10

Alone in the darkness, accompanied only by his fear.  
The crunching of leaves behind him, suggests something is near.  
A set of red eyes staring at him from the bushes, an owl from the coast  
Silhouettes of beasts around him, one larger than most.

The restless noise of crickets and frog.  
The eerie feel of the woods, now engulfed in fog.  
The man stood still, not moving an inch.  
Both hands out of his pockets, shaking and clenched.

Noises grew louder and the fog grew thicker.  
The branches seemed to grow by the second and intertwine like wicker  
The limbs grew at an increased rate  
Blocking the path to left and right, almost as if forming a gate.

The man turned behind him and started to panic.  
The path was closing behind as well. Was he going manic?  
He took off through the opening in front though the dense air  
He ran and ran, galloping like a mare.

He got as far as he could without stopping for a breath  
Which brought him to a red burning field, which smelt of death.  
Decaying animal carcasses with no movement  
Lay over one another torn and bent.

The man continued to run on a dried yellow path through the field  
But as he continued he spotted something on the ground and kneeled.  
It was his fifteen year old son rotting, he screamed but nobody could hear it.  
He stood back up, and started running away from the stench of teen spirit.

Bodies of men in ski masks, jump suits, and wife-beaters formed along the trail.  
That led to a single standing tree with branches that looked sharper than nails.  
He pinched his nose shut with his finger and ran towards it.  
As the wind picked up, the man struggled but it would not quit.

After making it through the harsh winds he arrived at the tree.  
Something was scribed in the trunk the man could see.  
"After everything you've just been through you should lay down for a spell.  
This is your new home after all. Welcome to Hell."

**The Snap** by Lindsay Legault-Knowles  
Grade 11

There are those in this world  
Who will always get under your skin.  
They will wave their arms near your chin  
To make sure you know that you are wrong

About this and that,  
Wrong about your own life's existence.

My blood started to boil  
It had been bent up inside  
Enough to make my mind seem fried-  
He had no idea what was to come.

Neither did I,  
In a fast flash of fury I grabbed his arm.

Twisting it into a lock  
Wrenching it over the bus seat  
His face became as red as a beet.  
Then came the snap.

His arm cracked in my hands  
The noise was enough to shake the earth  
My hands began to sweat as if they were in a hearth  
Fear struck into my eyes and I knew what was next.

Suspension, Court Cases, Alternative Justice, Community Service  
Endless questions from students' minds  
My mind was becoming blind  
Forever changed.

Constantly plagued by my own fate  
Until the one day that he accepted what had been done

And this occasion ended with the shake of a hand and a thank you  
For what been wrung.

**The Storm** by Christian Soychak  
Grade 10

Thunder booming like a lion's roar  
Rain drumming down in downpour  
Lightning flashes across the sky

Striking anything up too high

Rivers flood onto the shore  
The people cry out, "No more! No more!"  
The wind knocks down bushes and trees  
even cracking the hive, spilling its bees

But rain gives life and nourishment  
Although it may seep into your tent  
And where lightning strikes, fire burns  
But from the remains grows grass and ferns

So run, hide, scamper away  
As the trees do shake and sway  
But know that after this awful storm  
Life will soon return to norm

**The Storm Within** by Rebecca Cook  
Grade 10

Recall the storm  
Of life,  
From time to time,  
Ripping trees  
And cutting glass,  
Heaving forests through  
The cloudy haze,  
And robbing fresh flowers  
From a garden.

It leaves a void,  
And next comes  
Winter,  
Bare,  
There is no color,  
And it shall linger.

It takes days  
To heal,  
To sing,  
To sail,  
To soar,  
To live once more.

**The War in Writing** by Christian Soychak  
Grade 10

My pencil is some sword.  
My words strike down my opponent.  
Logic cannot lie.  
A battle won by words  
Is worth more than one won by weapons.  
Ideas are my generals  
That lead the charge.  
Each letter, a soldier  
Helping to push my thoughts  
Through the enemy's line  
And get my point across.  
Rhyme and reason  
Rectify wrongs,  
Wise words  
Win wars.

**This Door** by Taylor Hyer  
Grade 11

I've had doors close in my face before,  
but this one hurts the most.  
This time feels like the door was slammed,  
and it hit me in the face, hard.  
I've lost all hope on another door opening.  
It's almost as if every other one is glued shut.  
There's no way to pound one open,  
or to knock one down; I'm not that strong.  
I don't even know if I can build one on my own;  
I'm just not that smart.  
I've tried everything I can,  
but nothing seems to work for me.  
When this door closed,  
I knew I'd never get another one open again;  
It doesn't matter how hard I try.

**This Room** by Henry Reinecke  
Grade 10

The Baby,  
That is hanging from the ceiling  
Has a mustache.

A little man,

With his neck in a noose,  
Tied to the band on the projector canvas.

A broken ski  
Stuck in the ceiling  
With a kick wax next to it.

These and many more stories,  
All connected to the little man,  
Sitting behind his desk,  
Tapping with two fingers on his computer.

**Thugs** by Tanner Benoit  
Grade 11

Everywhere I go there are folks  
With flat brim hats and pants that sag low  
All I can do is laugh at these fools  
This is a fashion trending at schools?  
Put your hat on straight before i rant,  
Buy a belt and maybe pull up your pants?  
You'll never be a homie not in this town.  
There are no gangs for miles around;  
This is the way it is, I'll tell you now  
You live in the sticks with farmers and cows

**The Tire Swing** by Tanner Benoit  
Grade 11

Everyone's favorite swing.  
Cracked rubber like wrinkles  
Under a drooping pine branch  
Covered in children trying for a turn

**Tractor** by Liam Sweeney  
Grade 11

The feeling of emptiness still fills my heart  
when I find myself reminiscing about you.  
The laughter we would share and the music  
we listened to, the smell of the pizza,  
the last thing we ate together...

I feel so alone, cold, sad and shaken  
when reality swoops by, knocks me in chest  
and leaves me winded. There was so much

more I wanted to say to you, do with you,  
but it's too late now, so I sit in regret.

A dozen years of happy, energetic life  
taken from us all too soon. There was  
such much more for you to accomplish  
in life, like a graduation, a job, a wife.  
As long as you had your tractors...

I remember so distinctly the love you had for them.  
Green, blue, yellow, white, it didn't matter the color.  
John Deere was your favorite and you'd wear its apparel  
to school all the time, without a care in the world.  
So every time I ride a tractor, I ride it for you.

**Two Timer** by Asa Hoover  
Grade 11

Drivin' too fast on a dip in the road,  
I get pulled over, only sixteen years old.  
Saw the cop at my rear,  
The sirens were all i could hear.  
Second time around my sister was cryin'  
Same stupid mistake cause I was fllyin'  
He came up to the window as I rolled it down  
You gotta be kidding,  
Aren't there any other cops in town?

**Unfair** by McKayla Gillilan  
Grade 11

I sit like I am told,  
Speak when I am asked,  
eat when I am fed,  
and drink when it's available.  
I eat, sleep, and drink on the floor,  
and I'm rewarded when I'm good.  
It's up to my owners to find out what I want, what's wrong, and what I need.  
Don't see anything wrong with this picture do you?  
Now what if I told you I was a human?  
But wait, I don't see a difference.

**What is love?** by Elizabeth Skerrett  
Grade 10

Love.  
An odd feeling.

I try to understand  
Yet the more I try the less I can.

We know it when we feel it.  
But what is love?

The way a mother  
Stares at her new born baby?

What binds  
Two souls forever?

The way  
The moons light embraces the forest.

Or thunder responding  
To lightning's flash.

All that matters is that when I look  
Into your eyes it all makes sense.

**Wind** by Scout Donahue  
Grade 10

Sweeping leaves off their feet.  
Pushing branches until they meet  
Blowing soft, white cotton sheets.

Clutching tightly to tomorrows storm,  
you float lightly, chilly or warm  
with speeds of rage that harshly transform.

Captured to help power the world  
whipped around, twisted and twirled.  
Spinning in circles, swished and swirled.

You are the reason for many disasters  
when you circulate even faster  
you can never be mastered.  
Wind: you have a mind of your own.



**Worst Day of the Year** by Tanner Benoit  
Grade 11

Yup, today's my birthday but who cares  
About a party and dancing while the music blares?  
What are we really celebrating here?  
Let me tell you to get this clear  
Right now we're enjoying the day to remember  
Good old day three of September  
what! we're all happy I'm closer to death?  
That's all a birthday is, are you all on meth?!  
Just another year closer to the thunder  
When the digger puts me six foot under!

**"Your Friend," Autocorrect** by Ben Bosland  
Grade 10

There are times when it helps one spell,  
As I'm sure that you can tell,  
They say it's out there to help us,  
If only it would *lettuce*,  
It makes our words sound much dumber,  
Oh, what a *hummer!*  
I guess we should listen to that expression used in many cases,  
Slow and steady, always wins the *braces*.  
Despite being thought of as a helpful tool,  
It only makes me feel like such a *pool*.  
And it is always such a struggle to defect,  
Sincerely, "your friend", Autocorrect.

# Middle School Poetry

## First Place

**The Train** by Nathan Langlois

Grade 6

It hurtles towards me.  
The train.  
I brave myself.  
I close my eyes and listen to the sounds around...  
*'Get off the track!'*  
*Screeeeeeeeeeaaaaach!*  
*Thud*  
I think  
*'How did this happen?'*  
I pause, and then remember.  
*I decide to walk to work.*  
*I kiss my wife goodbye.*  
*I did not know it would be **goodbye***  
*I walk out onto the street.*  
*Oblivious*  
*I stroll up to the tracks.*  
*Ignorant.*  
*I drop my phone onto the track. I go get my phone.*  
*Foolish*  
*I am suddenly in the way. In the way of the train.*  
I try to relax. I start to breath.  
In. Out. In. Out  
Maybe I will not die. Maybe.  
In. Out. In. Out.....

And so ended the life of Nico Martin.  
Although he died, his story is not over.  
Because, dear reader, death is never the end,  
But rather,  
The beginning...

# Second Place

**Truth Be Told** by Ada Sorensen

Grade 6

Friendships can last, friendships can end  
Some people forget you, some people just can't  
You try to move on, but I guess it's not possible  
It's been way too long, from knowing each other  
Dream of a place where the friendships will last  
Think of the past and the people who stuck by you  
And the people who left,

Then you really know who knows you the best,  
It's not all that bad, people can change,  
But everyone's too caught up in the past,  
I speak from the heart not really the mind

It's difficult for people to understand,  
What goes on in some lives.

# High School Short Story

## First Place

**The Call** by Jared Quick

Grade 11

We arrived on scene, jumped out of the ladder truck, threw on our rubber gloves and rushed toward the car. Fifty feet away I could already see the blood spattered inside the vehicle, most of it on the passenger side of the car. It was a nice little sedan, maybe red but I couldn't tell with all the blood spattered everywhere. As we got closer to the car I could see two occupants, one moving in the driver's seat and the other squeezed between the passenger door and center console, screaming. The car had been t-boned going through an intersection. The passenger took the brunt of the collision.

The other vehicle had struck a cement barricade after spinning out of control off the road. It was a black four door truck. A few firefighters ran over to check on the driver who was slowly getting out of her vehicle in slight discomfort. They yelled for paramedics to go over and help assist the patient. They gently ushered her towards the ambulance helping comfort her in any way possible. They put her in the ambulance and quickly fled the scene on their way to Northwest Medical Center.

This left the rest of us with two more patients in the red car but no way to transport or give them the proper care they needed. Chief quickly grabbed his radio to call dispatch for additional tones and mutual aid from Cambridge's heavy rescue squad and ambulance. By now people were scattered everywhere: on the road, in the woods, peeking out of their bedroom windows. It apparently didn't take long for word to spread in the little town of Fairfax that there had been a major car accident. This might have even been one of the worst accidents ever in Fairfax.

People were standing all around the car and when we finally reached the vehicle the passenger had become unconscious. There was no more screaming. Everything was quiet as I stood looking in disbelief. The passenger was a female, medium build, low twenties, brown hair. The left side of her body was practically gone. It was the side that had been struck by the oncoming truck. Blood was slowly oozing out of the side of her face where her cheek should've been. It had been torn off, and the piece of skin was lying by her feet. Her left arm was all torn up and bloody; it looked like it didn't have a bone left in it. The same with her left leg. They were like two stringy pieces of bloody cherry jello hanging off her body. She was trapped between the center console and passenger door. Her entire body was in a space no wider than six inches.

As soon as the extra ambulances arrived it was go time. We had to move her fast before she awoke or even died. It was a race against the clock. We needed tools so I ran back to the truck grabbing the Jaws of Life, a halogen, and an axe. We stuffed the Jaws of Life into the door jam, making a gap wide enough to cut the hinges. It took twenty minutes just getting the gap wide enough. We were running out of time. She was slowly leaving us. We had to make a split second decision. Keep cutting or just yank her out of the car.

It became obvious; we had to move fast and pull her from the car. More firefighters piled into the car with her, to push from the inside. Eric, another firefighter, and myself stayed out to

pull. I reached in to grab her. Then I realized what I had to grab. It was her left side. The side that looked like it had just been processed by the butcher. I took a few steps back, trying to swallow the vomit that was just about to enter my mouth. I shut my eyes for two seconds thinking about what I could've been doing instead of this. I had skipped one of our biggest baseball games of the season. I could've been playing second base. Making the last out, bringing our team to the playoffs, being a hero in a different kind of way. A way that a normal teenager would dream of, instead of having nightmares every so often about one call. But I decided to go on.

I opened my eyes again. Eric was there looking at me asking if I was going to be okay. I just shook my head and grabbed what was left of her arm. On the count of three we pulled her as hard as we could, not worrying about her spine or the pain it would put her through. We wanted to save this girl's life, that was all that mattered at that given moment. As we freed her from the vehicle, EMT's rushed towards us with the stretcher all ready to go. We picked her up one last time and lowered her on the stretcher. As the EMT's scuffled back to the ambulance to transport her, we just stood there in disbelief of what we had witnessed.

Later that day we received the news that the female passenger of the red sedan had died. This hit us all hard. For most of us it was our first death since joining the fire department. I can't speak for the rest of the guys there that day, but I know what happened will be with me for the rest of my life. I think back every day of what I could of done differently to have kept her alive. Sometimes I even have nightmares of the girl being a family member of mine like my little sister or mom. It scares me that someday I could pull up to a scene and know the person in the vehicle. It's the one call I'll never forget.

# Second Place

**The Bird Feeder** by Tanner Benoit

Grade 11

Waking up on a cool crisp winter morning crows bickering in the pines outside my window I lean up, crack my neck on both sides, peer out the frosty window, and look down upon the ol' bird feeder. It's covered in options, gray squirrel, blue jay, chickadee, and some smaller brown birds. I scurry out of bed like a lizard across a wall. I feel up my old classic wood stock .22. That's all I need It's my personal sniper weapon of choice. I pop in a copper plated hollow point slide the bolt forward and lock it down then creep up to my vantage point my window on the second floor in my house. I crack the widow just enough to get the gun out. Only the crows are smart enough to take flight while the rest of the animals are oblivious in their rush to stuff their furry, and or feathered faces with corn seed. I scope the feeder and lock on to the gray squirrel. Click... Safety's off. I hold my breath and hold steady on the head and slowly as a nervous surgeon I slowly squeeze the trigger. BANG! A small cloud of smoke quickly makes my view hazy through my scope. But I see the squirrel as if stripped of its head and balancing skills, wobbling on its two hind legs trying to catch itself until it steps backwards flailing its arms, and it falls off the edge of the feeder into the twelve inch snow, leaving a blood splatter on the feeder glass and a small red outline of a squirrel in the snow.

I shut the window and jack the shell out smoke rolls out of the action I inhale every scent a sweet victory smell. I lie on my back staring at my ceiling trying to find a reason to hop out into the cold air to shower. My eyes shut and just as I begin to pass out RING RING RING RING. My cellphone goes off and quickly alerts me. I answer the phone. I am excited that it might be a friend wanting to make weekend plans. Nope just the cellphone company letting me know I can save money by giving them my credit card number. Now I'm just too awake to go to sleep so I roll out of bed like an old staggering drunk and stumble to the shower. Fifteen minutes later I'm dressed and ready for the world, unsure of what to do and where to go. Sitting up in my recliner I watch the cold snowy morning come to a close. I glance down at my phone, no messages, no notifications, no missed calls, email inbox empty. This not being unusual I turn it off and slide into a slump in my chair. I make my head stable by holding it up with my arm putting my elbow on the chairs arm I daze off into a day dream.

Here I am flying out of my house, then out of the state. Me flying, how bizarre! I just land on this tree and there's all these other flying people and their talking to me and starting to make friends with me. They actually want to talk to me and be my friend. We are free! Our wings and mind can go just as far as imaginable I feel limitless, like there is nothing I cannot do no restrictions.

Just as I started to get to the core of the dream I jerked my head upwards. Being startled, my cat jumps up onto my chest, so I walk over to the kitchen to feed him. I check my phone; it's the same, old same no new messages or anything, but it is 7:00pm! I have not even started dinner yet, looks like its toast and jam for supper. I burn through a jar of jam and a loaf of bread and half a gallon of milk that is one day past expiration. I finish out with a loud belching burp, and now it's 8:00 pm and my mind is anything but restless so it is time to crawl back into bed for hopefully another dream. If only I could just live that dream or there was a way to achieve that in my life.

Just how is the question. Just as I was trying to make sense of it all the lights went out and I was fast asleep like a cat in the warm sun. Then BAM! I was I'm the dream again looked down at my bird wings and I heard someone calling for me another bird man mutant was waving me over to this large gated off area with the words se libérer et être heureux. I didn't pick up the language and walked toward it. As I got to the entrance a very large mutant pushed me backwards and did not allow me to enter. I stood up and was puzzled by how he stood firm and I thought I heard him say "you are not free and he's still captivated." His voice was much too deep to be certain. Now I'm just dumbfounded, bewildered, shocked. What does this mean? I'm just as free as the next guy I go and do as I please? Staring up I look into the blue clouds above. There were words written in cloud but my vision was strangely hazy and suddenly I awoke from the scary dream. I felt the chilly morning grab ahold of my toes and tickle them. I sat up in bed and cracked my neck on both sides. I look out the frosty window I stare down at the ol' feeder options covered the feeder yet again. Blue jay, woodpecker, chickadee, cardinal, and some smaller brown birds. I did my lizard scurry across the floor to my .22 I rub the cold wood stock It feels beautiful in my hands, my sniper weapon of choice. Now I pop in the copper plated hollow point. I slide the bolt forward and lock it down. I'm fully ready now and I creep up to my vantage point. I crack the window just enough to get the gun out. Just as always the crows take flight, and disappear through the pines. The other creatures smothering their feathered faces in the corn seed. I get my scope up and lock onto the blue jay with my breath steady. Click safety's off the blue jay looks back at me over his wing shoulder... My mind draws a long thoughtful pause... Click safety's on.

# Third Place

Consequences by Frances Holmes-Henry

We pull up to the party an hour after it actually started. I can hear the music blaring as my sister, Audrey, and I get out of my black 2013 Nissan Altima Coupe. Audrey checks her make up around her huge brown eyes in the side mirror of the car. She has to bend down to see herself in the mirror because of her long skinny legs. She's almost as tall as me but that's because we're twins. The only thing different about us is our personalities. She's the smart, cautious one. I'm the reckless and stupid one, at least that's how I see it now. But besides this our brown hair, brown eyes, and our long legs all match up.

As we walk to the door I notice that basically everyone I know from our school is here. I swear, I don't know how they're all tightly packed into a two story log cabin by the lake. The lights of the cabin reflect off the lake and I can see figures are standing on the dock, laughing and jumping in. It's going to be a good night for sure.

As we walk in I can already see the groups forming. The shy ones are in the corner, waiting for someone to come over and make conversation with them. They are a combination of nerds and the people who don't play a sport. The couples, who are sitting on top of each other on the couches in the main room, making out, are not aware of their surroundings. Then there's the wasted chicks, dancing in front of the speakers giggling and winking at guys watching. Then everyone else, the people who like me play sports and know everyone are just milling around talking to whoever crosses their path. I kick empty cups away from the doorway. Some of them still have some alcohol in them, so it sprays people. One guy turns around looking like he is going to throw a punch.

"Aye watch it man---Jackson! My man, sick pass and touchdown today, right?" Garrett, the quarterback on the team, says grinning from ear to ear. His blonde hair falls just below his eyebrows but I can still see his eyes, shining bright with happiness.

"Yeah man, without you passing it to me I don't know if we would have won," I say as I slap him on the back. "Okay now where's the drinks? Let's get this party started!" I yell and throw up my hands encouraging everyone to get rowdy. Cheers drown out the music. Party time!

I look at my sister. Her nose is scrunched up like she smells something bad, probably because she's not used to the smell of alcohol. "Audrey, your friends are over there." I point to the nerd corner. "Why don't you join them now? I got you to the party, now go." I can't have her on my back the whole time. That'll make me look like I'm babysitting my twin sister.

As I watch her walk away Garrett pops up in my view with two red cups, probably filled with beer. He tries to get up on the chair beside me but he struggles to keep his balance. "Getting a little tipsy already?" I say laughing.

"Hey shut up man, this is for you." Garrett raises both of the red cups in the air and yells, "To Jackson! For getting the winning touchdown. We're going to the playoffs!"

Everyone raises their cups and cheers. I look around grinning so much my face hurts, then I grab the cup in Garrett's left hand. I make eye contact with Audrey just before I take a sip. She just glares at me, which makes me want to just drink it in one gulp. So I do, and man, it burns like hell.

Two hours later, maybe one in the morning, Audrey finds me dancing with this wasted chick, whose name I don't even know. She tries to get my attention, but I ignore her. I don't want to stop. Drunk dancing is the best kind of dancing there is. No one gives a shit about what moves you do, not if your dancing with other drunks. Audrey is clearly not drunk, and her eyes aren't



glossy like everybody else. I think that if I ignore her long enough she'll give up and go back to her goodie-two-shoe friends. But she doesn't so I decide to go to the back of the house to get another drink, or two.

It's so crowded that it takes me what feels like five minutes to get there, freakin' ridiculous people. I see Garrett flirting with the girl he's been liking for a while, Audrey's friend Isabella. I don't see what he sees in her because she's just like Audrey, clean and sober. I kind of feel bad for them all because they're missing out on all the fun.

I get lost in my thoughts of how bad I feel for them but I get pushed forward. "Can you not push me whoever just did. Get some damn manners," I say as I turn around. "Oh shit, Audrey." I whisper. When I see the look on her face. She raises an eyebrow when she gets mad.

"Get some damn manners? Are you serious right now?" She sounds more frustrated than ever. "You know you shouldn't drink. It makes you think differently and you do irrational things, like right now. I think you're the one without manners if you ask me. But you know what Jackson? Whatever, have fun. You can go home and get yelled at by Mom about being drunk under the age. I've covered your ass too many times. It's time for you to face the consequences you've been running from for years."

I just stare at her for a second before saying anything. "What do you know? I'm only having fun. Can't get in trouble for living life!" I grab her shoulders and move her to the side. "Now excuse me but I actually have friends I want to talk to. I don't want to stare at my pathetic twin who doesn't know what fun is." With that I walk to the kitchen to find more drinks.

Later, I try to find Garrett and my football friends to hang out with them. My head is pounding from the music. The whole room is spinning and I keep stumbling over cups and running into random things here and there. I might have walked around the cabin three times by now and still no one from the football team in sight. Whatever though, I go sit on one of the counters in the kitchen with a bottle of vodka in one hand. The marble counter top is cold on the back of my thighs because my shorts slid up. I push my shorts back down and just stare at the ground and get lost in a daze.

At least ten minutes later I hear a commotion in the front followed by the front door opening and shutting many times. Eh, probably just a fight and someone was too much of a chicken to finish it. I hear footsteps coming this way so I hop off the counter to go offer them a drink. My back is turned to the opening of the room. Without turning around I say effortlessly, "Wanna drink or somethin'?" I fill the cup up without waiting for a response. I turn around and just stare. "Oh shit..." My voice trails off in shock. Not only is it an adult, but it's my coach standing in the doorway of the kitchen.

"I actually live next door," Coach Williams continues to explain, "and my wife and I can't fall asleep because of the noise. So I decided to come over and tell someone to turn it down a notch and look what I find, Jackson Daily, drunk off his ass." He sounds more disappointed than last year when we lost the big game. "Why Daily? Why? I thought you had a head on your shoulders." He begins to raise his voice in anger. "I honestly cannot think of anything else but to kick you off the team Daily."

"But-but, but didn't you see the other guys? Why are you just talkin' to me s-sir?" I slur my words in confusion.

"I haven't seen them. You're the first one I came across. Damn, you're one unlucky guy tonight." He crosses his arms around his big beer belly. It's funny because he can barely do it, but I hold back my smirk.

The house sounds empty right now. It's like no one else is here but us. Player's worst nightmare, to get caught drinking by a coach. I just stare at the ground. I really don't know what's going on. I just want to get out of here. Party's over. Time to go home.

I start to leave the room but Coach yells, "Hey I'm not done with you!"

I still continue to walk out. I don't even care anymore and I need to find Audrey because we're getting out of here. I stumble out the door onto the driveway. I look at the bushes I parked my car next to and it isn't there. "That dang bitch left me." I mutter to myself, and there's no one left to get a ride from. I turn around and Coach Williams is standing in the doorway.

"Don't even ask. I don't want to, but I'll drive you home. You are going to your parents like this and I'm going with you," he says.

My stomach drops. Honestly I have no other choice. I can walk, but because of the state I'm in, I realize that isn't such a great idea. So I nod slowly and Coach and I begin the walk back to his house to his car. I feel the cold breeze and I start to shiver and I understand it is going to get much, much colder for me.

# Middle School Short Story

## First Place

**My Surface** by Colin Marble

Grade 6

My feet were planted firmly in the sand. The movement of the ocean was mesmerizing, gently nudging me from all directions. The sky was a turquoise blue, but gradually faded into a darker shade. The tessellation of light danced around my feet sometimes tricking me into believing that I was moving, a scene that I had dreamt of far too often. Fish of all colors peeked at me from behind the chipped misshapen mounds of rock, at times blending in with the surrounding blooms of coral. For any other person this place would be paradise, the color, the blissful silence, and the feeling of weightlessness. But for me, it was terrifying. Being alone and unable to do anything more than move had led me to believe that this is the way it will end. I will stand here and wave in the changing currents not unlike any piece of plant life that floats by until either I pass from natural causes, or I succumb to the ocean's many fates. There is one way out, the only way out, the surface.

I'd dreamt of reaching the surface. The taste of fresh air and the unending expanse of civilization. People, cars, and tall buildings shaping the skyline. I'd dreamt of taking my dive helmet off. The satisfying sound it would make when I break the seal between it and my suit, and the feeling of fresh clean air entering my lungs. Though my dreams vividness only worsened the feeling of opening my eyes and looking at the inside of the small opaque glass pane that separates me from the ocean.

A blue fish, a friend. He floats around and through the coral from time to time, but never gets too close. Not until recently did he come within arms' reach but as I stretched my arm to touch his side, he quickly darted away and out of sight. As the moonless sky turned from blue to black, my sanity dwindled. I became paranoid, I tried to convince myself that what I had seen were hallucinations but I knew it wasn't true. I saw schools of fish pass by, their scales reflecting the moonlight and shining like stars in the sky. It could be comforting at times, but when they disappeared it only reminded me of the situation I was in. As I looked into the black I noticed a blue tint to the right of me. I turned my head slowly and floating next to me was the blue fish. His scales reflecting a vibrant blue light as his tail quietly swayed from side to side keeping him still. I stared at him but I did not reach my arm. He slowly moved to the front of me and my eyes followed. I looked at him head on, his tail gently swaying and peeking out from either side of his blue lit body. We stared at each other and did not move for quite a while, but the moment of intimacy and peace was shattered by his quick and quiet disappearance. My eyelids closed and I fell into a deep sleep for the first time in a long time.

When I woke the sky was blue and clear, I felt calm and awake. Without thinking, I lifted my leg and placed it forward as if I was going somewhere. I stopped in awe, looking down at the plume of dust and sand that settled around my foot. For the first time in a long time I had taken a step. Scared and excited at the same time, I moved my other foot forward but before I stepped I stopped. The thought that I was dreaming along with a feeling of terror shot in and out of my mind. I placed my foot down and stood. I turned to look at where I had been but the prints had collapsed as if I had never been there. I felt like I should have been sad, like I should have regret

moving but I was quickly overtaken by my eagerness to leave. After a few steps I could walk with ease, I walked until I reached the bottom of an incline that rose to a beach. A feeling of uneasiness entered my body. I felt like something wasn't right, but I thought that maybe my memory was failing me and that what I thought was, wasn't. I shook my head and began to climb. With every step, my stomach grew queer. I climbed until I could easily reach my hand above the surface but there I stopped. I thought back to the fish, to the quiet blue sky that was not disturbed by the shimmering sun through the surface. To the colorful blooms of coral, and to the inescapable feeling of weightlessness. A tear ran down my cheek and off my chin. I closed my eyes and stepped forward. I walked until I felt my body grow heavy. I stepped up a stair sized mound of sand and quickly fell to the ground. I held my eyes closed. My body had grown weak and unsuited for the full weight of gravity. More tears pushed their way through my tightly closed eyes. I pulled myself up the beach, through the advancing and receding waves, they washed over and beside me. The noise of seagulls, the waves, and wind overtook all of my senses. It had been a long time since I had taken in this much sound. Not being able to pull myself any further, I relaxed my body and fell flush with the sand. I thought back to the ocean and to the silence. To the gentle currents that gingerly rocked me from side to side, and to the calm feeling that overtook me when I stared deeply at the blue fish. I tilted my head up and opened my eyes.

There was nothing. The black tinted beach continued to an endless expanse of bare, flat, and dry desert. There were no cars, no city, no people. The world that I had remembered and dreamt about was gone. Gravity had made my suit heavier than I could bear. I was alone and unable to do anything more than move my toes.

# Second Place

Accepting Phoenix Blue by Oliva Babcock  
Grade 6

Everybody in the world wants some type of acceptance. Some want acceptance for schooling, acceptance from family, and acceptance from those surrounding them. Everybody experiences these but usually only let one of them show. There are the preppy people who want to become the best they can be – those are the ones who want acceptance for schooling, they’re the ones who would for their family to accept them even if they already do – those are the ones who want acceptance from their family, and lastly they’re the ones who want acceptance from the people around them. Some people might call them outcasts or wallflowers. I would be considered both of those but the truth is I’m not. I’m Phoenix Blue.

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New Schools can be hard. It feels like people stare at you as if you have grown another head. That’s exactly what I’m feeling right now. I slam the locker door after putting away my things and start towards the school’s parking lot. Today was my first day at Belmont Union and I have been getting those stares all day. All day I had been shoved around, gawked at, and glared at. I did meet the janitor and he was pretty cool, but let’s face reality here. The school seemed pretty stereotypical. There are little cliques, the few teachers who seemed really enthusiastic and all about ‘bright futures’, and the typical teen drama.

After driving around for about thirty minutes exploring the little town, I finally reached a small diner towards the town line. There aren’t too many people there; most of the kids are across the train tracks, over at the pier. The walls are all wood with an aging tin roof. There are signs lining the walls with various specials and old road signs. The sign above the screen door says Aunt Ruth’s. Seems nice. I walk inside and find my way to a wood booth without any cushions. The inside is also wood and has pictures of people, cars, and other various things. There is a long counter almost reaching all the way across the room and lights hanging from the ceiling. There are about seven people in there right now, all older couples. I’m brought out of my observations by somebody clearing their throat. I look up to find a woman in her mid-20s, snapping her gum with an impatient look on her face.

“Are you going to order or am I standing here for no reason?” She snaps in a low smoker’s voice while glaring at me. I glance down at my menu and decide on the first thing I see.

“I’ll have the black n’ blue with a coke please,” I respond while handing her the menu. She rolls her eyes and does this weird penguin waddle walk while wearing high heels that look like they could break any second. I hold in my laugh while turning my attention back to the window.

“Ain’t she a charmer.” A male voice chuckles.

I turn my head to see a guy about my age, 17, with this dark brown hair in a quiff. He has green eyes, and an amused expression written across his dark face. He had green eyes, and an amused expression written across his face.

“That’s one way to put it.” I say with a small smirk. He lightly laughs before holding out his hand, a kind smile on his lips.

“Hey, I’m Alec. You’re the new girl right?” He greets me while I shake his hand.

“Hey, yeah that would be me. The name’s Phoenix,” I say before we fall into silence. We stay like that for about five seconds. HE awkwardly shifts on his feet,”

“Oh yeah... um... would you like to sit down?” I ask while gesturing to the seat in front of me. He just chuckles and sits down.

“So you liking Belmont so far? Not too much happening around here.”

“Yeah it’s pretty cool. I just moved here from Rockstine, Nevada, so it’s nice to see more of the country.” I explain. So far he seems nice. Not many people would just come up to you back home. We continue to ask each other questions about everything we can think of. It turns out he is an only child just like me, he also goes to Belmont Union, and loves to play soccer. Apparently Belmont is really into the sport. Right now both of us are laughing uncontrollably, probably causing stares. I look around after we have both sobered up and see that we are the only ones left in the diner.

“I think I should probably head out now.” I sigh, still giggling.

“Yeah that’s probably a good idea, mind if I have your number?” He asks shyly. I giggle once again and we type our numbers into each other’s phone. We exchange our goodbyes and get into our own cars. Ok, so maybe first days aren’t that bad...

## Chapter 2

Groaning, I slam my fist on my alarm. Day two. I fight off the urge to stay in bed and walk to the bathroom. My room looks like something off of some teen blog with a bunch of pictures of Starbucks. It has cream wall with a canopy of Christmas lights. There is a small desk with my laptop where I do my writing, and a closet.

I run a brush through my blonde hair, eliminating any tangles. I apply some light brown mascara and leave my room. I throw on a pair of white jean shorts, a blank tank top, and a plaid red shirt that ties in the middle. Running downstairs I see my parents. My dad is sitting there with Mum straitening his tie. Both of my parents work at a law firm which is in the town next to us. We moved to Belmont because my parents thought I shouldn’t have to grow up in the city. After saying goodbye to my parents, I grab my flip flops and make my way to my GMC Sierra. As soon as I get into the truck, I lean back in my seat and let out a long and heavy sigh. Back at my old school I was what you considered to be an outcast, looked over by everybody. It started around fifth grade, when my friends started distancing themselves from me. I wasn’t sure why but I didn’t think much of it because Mum said that it must have been just a little stage they were going through. Over the summer I wasn’t as close to my friends but I just tried to think it would get better. When we became sixth graders and moved onto the middle school, it seemed to get worse. Not only my friends were ignoring me, but also a good portion of the other kids were too. Throughout middle school it stayed like that, with occasional bullying. I wasn’t sure what I did and it hurt. It was like we were all identical goldfish in a bowl but there was something wrong with me that caused everybody swim away. Throughout the beginning years of high school this became my normal. But along with only being considered a shadow, the bullying got worse. I started to just distance myself from everybody, but deep down I knew I was dying for acceptance. It hurt so much but I shut it down. It felt like I was in a black hole and after a while, I knew I couldn’t get out and nobody was going to try to pull me out. Soon my parents got a job in North Carolina and I was thrilled. I would be able to start. So far it seems the same but I will just wait and see.

After paying for my meal, I sweep my gaze over the lunch room. I see almost all of the tables are full and it’s raining outside. When I finish searching the lunch room I finally find a bench at the back of the room. Setting down my tray, I pull out my ear buds and my iPod. Letting One Republic drown out the voices of the student body, I start eating the thing on my plate. The reason I said ‘thing’, is because I can’t really tell what it is. Well I guess we’ll find out. As I bite into the

'thing', I feel a tap on my shoulder. I look up to meet a pair of familiar green eyes. I pull of my ear buds and smile.

"Hey Blue," He says, picking up my tray to sit down.

"Hey Ryder," I say back, using his last name. I watch him as he reaches his hand into my Lays bag. With a determined expression on his face, he pulls out at least seven chips. I snatch the bag away before he can steal anymore. I looked around us. A few people have started to look at us. When I say 'a few people' I mean a good portion of the popular people. There is also a few glares from the girls. Eh. I am about to say something just as Alec grabs on of my ear buds and puts it in his ear. I have always hated when people share ear buds. You're basically putting a piece of plastic that has been in possibly more than one set of ears and also probably has ear wax on it. Yeah, not that pretty when you say it how it is.

"If I die of some weird ear disease, I will haunt you until the day you die." I stated in all seriousness. He just chuckles and makes another go for the Lays bag, which I quickly hold out of reach.

"Well I will keep that in mind. So, you doing anything after school today?" he asks, looking hopeful.

"I'm a free bird. Why, you want to do something?" I ask.

"Yeah, I was wondering if you wanted to catch a flick across the tracks."

"Sounds good. But how do I know you're not some person that's going to kill me after the movie behind the dumpster?" I ask joking. "Or did you already plan the murder with the ear disease? Smart decision, it would be harder to leave any trace of evidence." I look him straight in the eye. He bursts out laughing and shakes his head.

"I can assure you, you're safe." He says with one eye roll. I just chuckle as the bell rings, signifying the end of lunch. We start to walk into the hall way to our classes. We make small talk, mostly about which reality TV show is the worst, until we reach my classroom.

"So I will see you later at the school exit, ok?" I ask.

"Yeah, see you listen," He replies with weird face that consists of him crossing his eyes and puckering his lips, right before he runs screaming at the top of his lungs in the direction of his next class "SEE YOU LATER, PHOENIX BLUE!" I just laugh, making my way into the class. So far the day has been pretty good. I have already made a new friend. I even made plans to hang out with the 'new friend'. Maybe being accepted won't be as hard as I thought it would be. Maybe I already am accepted. I smile to myself, taking a seat.

# Photos

## First Place

Francesca Harvey  
Grade 12





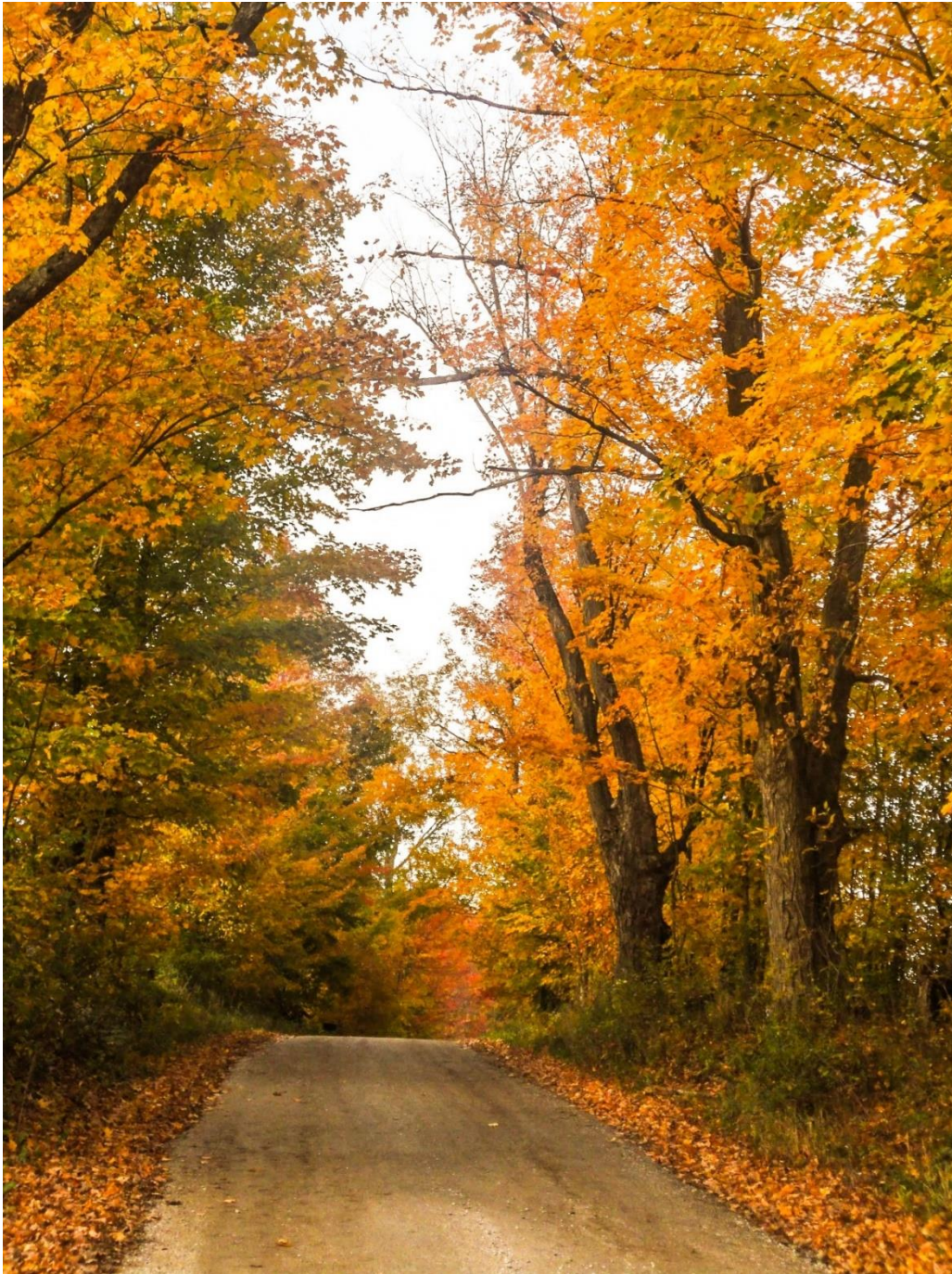
# Second Place

Francesca Harvey  
Grade 12



# Third Place

Melissa Cote  
Grade 11



Celynn Seimons  
Grade 10



CeLynn Seimons  
Grade 10



# Artwork

## First Place

The Softball Twins by Erin Ploof and Emma Latimer



