Ophelia’s Only Option

Oh Ophelia, oppressed by the overprotective,
Ophelia, don’t you feel lonely and lost,
Nobody to turn to who is your equal,
No one to admire who is peaceful
Brother sailed away to France,
You never stood a chance.
He went away with your freedom,
Your life is a prison, no escape, no hope.
A love was revealed to you,
Words sweeter than honey,
Hamlet’s love is a captive animal in a cage,
Ophelia endured Hamlet’s blank expression
A mourning river, tears constantly streaming
Prevent the man from being true
Poor Ophelia, as confused as a fish out of water
It is true that love is a lemon - either bitter or sweet.
An impulsive interaction led inamorato to immolate Polonius
Lack of Control continued to consume the consort
The thumping of her heart was whooshing in her ears,
The white dove quickly gets lost in a stormy sky
The crown had discarded its heir to paranoia,
The heir was shipped away.
The king desired his power to stay
Lies encompassed them everyday
The wheels in her head stopped churning
Her whole world was burning
Songs that screamed of yearning
Ophelia’s mental state soon became disturbing
She could not take it, not at all
Into the river she let herself fall
She could not take it, not at all
Release from a life filled with pain
Ended with nothing to lose and everything to gain
Into the grave the drowned form fell to dwell.
At last the girl left her world doing well.
No worldly pain left all alone to face.
Her tragic death, the ultimate disgrace.
The end of times came.
She was released from a life without power,
Where others filled her with shame.
The Pearly Gates opened to her pure state.
Jayden Andregg
Age: 13, Grade: 7
School Name: Somerset Academy-Losee, North Las Vegas, NV
Educator: James Lippit
Category: Poetry

The Fox and the Box
A fox, yes, a fox
Found a little box
So curious of what’s inside
Yet he put it aside

He was out hunting for some prey
Yet the box put him astray
He said he was going to do something more
So he went straight for the door

Went to the basement
To find the boxes placement
He finally found the drawer
Then he opened the drawer door

He went through old stacks
Then he found it near the cracks
When he opened the box
Turned out it was not a rare faux

Not even a precious stone
Just a random ancestors bone
Then the fox learned not to get curious
Or else the outcome will be furious
To Love or Not to Love

I look into the pristine water
I see two green eyes looking back at me
I wonder if he will notice me today?

To love or not to love?
I was told to not give in to him,

But he sent me letters that I could not ignore
Each one left me wanting more

The words written were vibrant and it was clear he was an angel sent from heaven to be with me
My heart told me he cared and my mind was beginning to believe it too,
And when I told my father
He developed a plan so I could be with him
I was to walk down the hallway and wait for him

I wanted to impress
I craved his attention
I fixed my dress
I feared rejection

When he came my heart fluttered,
But his eyes showed everything but desire
They told lies and criticized

His words dragged daggers down my heart
He spoke like the devil
What could I have done wrong?
“To a nunnery go” rang through my head as I sobbed
How could he think so little of me, when I thought the world of him?
He might as well have pierced my heart with his blade

To love or not to love?
It only got worse from there
He killed my father and was thought to be insane by everyone
My heart could no longer handle the gossip or truth.

I look into the now murky water
I see two tear-stained, red eyes looking back at me
No wonder he doesn’t notice me
My appearance was flawed,
My status could not compare,
He was a prince in line for the crown
I was a servant's daughter.
I could not have been anything more but a temporary thought to him.
Nothing more than desperate and a fool in his eyes.
How I would long for him to look at me with his eyes.

To love or not to love?
Why live as a disgrace to my family, I wonder
I had nothing to give
I get closer to the water and ponder
No father, no love, no reason to live
It was all a hoax.

I was drained,
I scream and the tears roll down my face for the hundredth time today
I could hear my heart racing
Conflicted, corrupted, and confounded

To love or not to love?
I go into the water for relief,
It was my only choice
The water was safe and welcoming
I stayed in the water not wanting to face Hamlet or see the sun come up again.
I stayed in the water even when my body said to get out,
I stayed in the water even when I needed air,
I stayed in the water because I could never have him,
I stayed in the water because my heart saw no other way, and my mind believed this too.

To love or not to love?
My final thoughts were of him saving me
Saving me from the water, saving me from my worthless life,
And running away with me, so we could be together,
But that was just a temporary, desperate, and foolish thought because he never came.
I wish I had not loved him.

Works Cited
Home

doesn’t
have to
be the place where you grew up.
It just has to be where you feel love.

Home doesn’t have to be the place where you drank out of your sippy cup. It just has to be what you could never get sick of. Home doesn’t have to have a tree with a swing. It just has to know exactly what to say. Home doesn’t even have to be a physical thing. It just has to be there for you at the end of the day. You don’t know what home is until you’re home. I’m just lucky enough to say I no longer have to roam. I can finally say with confidence that she is my home.

broken heart

So much can try to tear love apart.
They tell you it’s from the heart. They say family

Sabotage from parents.
can form you into the person you should be. I am
days until we are free. So

The idea is daunting. But once it’s all past us, think
about the love we will be flaunting. That’s the thing
about love. So much can try to tear
love apart, but a love like this

will always be together in the end.
Character Poem: Ophelia

down.
Wedding at a Concentration Camp

i wasn’t there
but trust me
i’ve heard this story before

white clouds
the color of smashed bone
hovered over my great-grandparents’ wedding
when a young woman wandered
an imaginary aisle
/delicately-stepped cement/
through rows of shaved heads
and numbered arms
and sickly faces twisted into starved smiles
her wedding dress floated behind her
past jagged rocks
and the teeth of German officers

she tells me of
    a paratrooper’s parachute
shakily stitched
    a white gown
    a dying woman
    alive with new radiance

i wasn’t there
but trust me
i’ve heard this story before

grey clouds
the color of rotting corpse
surrounded my great-grandparents’ wedding
a young man married
under a chuppah of smokestacks
the sky scorched
burning flesh
masked by whatever flowers they could find
whatever flowers could grow in a place like that
inhaling death
in all its grey
but still
they survive
he tells me
    beautiful things don’t belong in concentration camps
    like flowers
    or a wedding

i wasn’t there
    (neither was God)
but trust me
i’ve heard this story before

black clouds
the color of mangled eighth notes
choked my great-grandparents' wedding
an orchestra of barbed wire
carved music
from eerie silence
i remember a violin
/a voice thinner than evening/
frozen in the night air
its tremble masked as forgotten vibrato
black ribs poking through wooden flesh

a wedding march
dissipates into the evening
nobody listens

i wasn’t there but
please,
let me pass on this story

red clouds
the color of rusted nightmares
closed in on my great-grandparents' wedding
and followed them the rest of their lives
they live and die under darkened skies
i only hear about from memories
mere whispers of a time
that will remain behind my great grandparents’ eyes
long after the last time
i will hear this story.
Liahm Blank
Age: 16, Grade: 11
School Name: Adelson Educational Campus, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Abigail Moyal
Category: Poetry

Lice at the Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp

They crawl.
Swarm our matted hair and bloodstained scalps
lay eggs in our eyelashes
we put hands behind our head in surrender and itch into hysteria
writhing under translucent bed sheets They crawl.
More vile than the feces our bare feet tread upon
Lice give themselves up to no pattern
twisted insects contorting to breed chaos
leaving themselves buried They crawl. deep within the scalp of our corpses
each leg creeping on baggy skin
slinking They crawl. from follicle to follicle to leech Jewish blood
They who feast on prisoners
who carry guns in unknown holsters
slither behind They crawl. the safety of a red armband
each black swastika a pincer
stabbing into rotting flesh
A camp swarming with lice
steals the bitter blood of survival
one empty prisoner at a time

We force ourselves outside in the snow
grab handfuls of ice and rub them on our naked bodies
but the cold is not worse than the filth
and the grime and itching and scratching
than they who crawl
around camp and kill us from the inside out
than they who carry our diseased souls on their wretched bodies
than they who live to watch us die
a pitiful
bloodless
death
On Ecuadorian Child Labor

i.

i grow from bananas.
single seed and sunlight eyes
yellow flesh
wrapped in cool leaves
i dangle green upside down until harvest
when boys with machetes cut me down
stab my stalk with curvos
bag my fruit and throw me with the rest
i cry out
they stamp me with a Dole sticker.

ii.

i was seven.
they hand me a machete and send me into jungle that is too familiar
the air is sweet and the soil is soft
i take a deep breath in and slice at stalks
a boy with a machete
a man
skin of a bruised peel
announces aerial fumigation
i don't know what it means
but I hold my shirt over my nose and continue to work
my eyes burn
and my lungs rot inside of me
collapsing over each other
two banana stalks crumbling
but still i work

iii.

this is not the jungle I remember.
it is not trees or fruit
or bananas or sun
it is plantation
and fungicide and insecticide and pesticide
i rip fruit with my bare hands
lay leaves to rest at my feet
machete slices stalk
machete slices arm
the sap burns red  
blood trickles down my wrist  
falls to jungle  
i take $3.50 and give them my hand  
they toss it in with fingers and legs  
and send me back into the field  
a boy with a machete

iv.

they lay me down to rest  
among banana leaves and  
soil that scraped the flesh from my feet  
i dream of math and reading  
a teacher scoops soil into her palms  
lays it on broken leaves  
they call my death compost  
my hand forgets everything but machete grip  
i close my eyes under skies that sear my eyelids  
decompose into the ground  
die with the bananas  
a boy with a machete  
leaves nothing behind  
but a Dole sticker
Sitting at the Back of a Jazz Club

Foot meets floor at every strum
Of the bassist's humbly-plucking thumb.
Live inside the tavern's hum,
For jazz will greet them when they come.

Head fills with the black and white
Of the piano's lull to summer night.
Rest among the swaying light,
For jazz will pause their endless flight.

Nose sips in the smoky tone
Of the burning horn's drowsy, golden groan.
Hold the harmony as your own,
For jazz will make their presence known.

Fingers roll to the nodding beat
Of the drummer's brushing, blushing feat.
Sink deep into the leather seat,
For jazz will be there for them to meet.

Eyes close to the mellow release
Of the quartet's fall to silent cease.
Remain until the cases crease,
For jazz will grant them a moment's peace.
Laughter's Weep

It begins in my throat
Like a raging fire
Subdued to embers
I am
Full of laughter
Forgetting the days when life left me
Emptyed by my own tears
A bubble popped by a pin
Leave me here
With a joke
Cheer me up
It is futile to
Remember
Tears and flushed cheeks
So I embrace
The warmth of any sunshine
I have never known
Scratchy throat and puffy eyes
And envision
I will weep a child's weep
When this poem is reversed

(Now read from bottom to top)
Decay

5
Rotund belly and rounder face. A white tank top fits itself around his stomach as his face fits itself around his
dentured smile. I didn't learn my great-grandfather's name until later. Saba, I say. My grandfather. He sinks into the
warm couch and pats his knee, an invitation though the couch is big enough for two. Soft skin and sturdy bones, I
find my place and he holds my waist with strong hands. Bounce, bounce, drop, whoop! I fall through the air and
almost to the ground before he pulls me back up to his knee. He laughs, roars like a lion. I laugh, a cub. Both hearty
chuckles full of life and energy. I nestle into his stomach, a pillow, puzzle-pieced humans and we fall into the brown
couch.

10
I learned the definition of decay when I was in fifth grade. Decay, the gradual wearing down of something over time,
the decline into shadows, the dust that floats in gilded window lines swiped away by your hands. Whither into sand
and then smoke and then nothing. Nothing. My science teacher holds up bone samples. Talks of radioactive particles
and half-lives. I study the diagrams of dinosaur fossils and think I know what this word means.

11
I am as tall as my great-grandfather now. I look him in the eyes and I can see how much effort it takes for him to lift
his eyelids, heavy and losing lashes. When I hug my great-grandfather hello he brings lion paws down on my back,
and I feel the scruff of his skin.

My arms can fit all the way around him now.

He gives me and my siblings these silly hats: red and blue and green covered in artificial fluff. I take mine off and put
it on his round head. He laughs, roars like a lion and I am getting there. I love my great-grandfather's laugh, from the
belly and curled by his tongue, spinning into the ears of everyone around. I hug this man and feel him shake with
laughter, and I start laughing too. He coughs, and a dentured smile appears.

13
Skinny and drooping. A white tank top falls around his body. Shrinking. His smile disappears into wrinkles and
baggy cheeks. He is rough skin and failing bones. I am taller now, and strong but he looks uncomfortable in the
kitchen chair. He invites me to his knee and I find my place. He holds my waist with shaking hands, though not the
tremble of laughter I once knew. There is no familiar bounce this time. There is no drop and the trust in a catch. He
cannot get his leg up to bounce me into the air.

And it is as if his bones crash under me and clatter to the floor. He lay there, soft and broken, a pile of ribs on a
kitchen chair and wrinkles melting into a puddle around my feet. I should have seen the descent into shadows long
before night arrived, but I didn't know decay until I saw it with my own eyes.

Until I saw a man shrink into himself and forget his bones and pillow gut, forget the kitchen chair and the knee,
forget the brown couch and the hats, forget the laugh and the smile.
I saw a man shrink from lion to cub and then some.
First went the laugh, barely a whisper, then strength.

I saw a man decay and decay and decay and decay until I held ribs and child in my arms.

His face drained to white and his eyes reflected nothing.
Nothing.

He slipped through my hug and fell to the bottom of a shattered hourglass.

He is smoke. He is smoke, and he is sand, and he is everything that left me grasping for more time.

I pull up a chair next to him.
**Necromancer**

The dubious man sat with his hands clasped,  
Orchestrated precisely as so to keep intact,  
Catechized greatly about the attack, he stifled back,  
While he piously prayed in faith to retract.

The hearing would be soon,  
Though time was subdued,  
So he passed the time in sleep.

In short time it rang noon,  
He was brought to a tribune,  
Who declared if he should be free.

A witness on the stand,  
Was dealt a heavy hand,  
In search of what she aimed, she plead.

In his final decree,  
The last free word he breathed said,  
“Why believe in anything when nothing believes in me.”

A sentence to life marked the end of his sentence,  
Days spent in solitude asserted his repentence,  
The longer he lingered festered his resentment,  
For the fiendish foe that stripped him of sentience.

From the moment we met,  
His demeanor was complex,  
Unlike any I’d ever been sent.

In his white padded room,  
He would sit all seclude,  
For they kept him away from the rest.

The orange suit he wore for dress,  
Couldn’t mask the corpse beneath,  
He confessed.

For, the air in his lungs was the only thing left,  
Separating him from the departed,  
At best.

Conversation with a cadaver left I, the necromancer,
The phantom of liberty, promenades like a dancer,
His name degraded, no matter his candor,
Compliance to confinement remains to be the only answer.
Poem on Hamlet (Character is Claudius)

Claudius & His Fox

Sly as a fox  
A fox with intelligence beyond imagination  
Madman mangaling leaving mischief in his wake  
Claudius that dog  
Sly as a fox  
A man  
Used as a sacrificial lamb  
Life laid haste  
Life laid waste  
His brother, Hamlet  
The crown  
New crown  
This of deceit  
Bark! This dog rips out the heart of a son  
Asking for her hand  
Shreds it to a million pieces  
Sly as a fox  
Dark the winter night, cold  
The wind blows silent brining an unexpected gift,  
Demise  
Born second  
Burned first  
A land laid waste with all its young men slain  
No death  
Unless it ‘tis the heart  
‘Tis the mind  
A dog, shredding his way through the bog  
Words bumble  
As the bushes bramble  
Caught in a wake of his own thought  
A wise fool  
Jewel sized brain  
Only riches on the mind  
But not silver  
Irony thrusts through the chest  
A point not dulled at best  
Poisoned by his hand  
Son taking his last stand  
Poisoned by silver  
The sword thrust by the young sir  
The crown has fallen
Collapsed to the ground
The crowned has fallen
The crown
Fallen thrice.
CASTELLANO, DIEGO

Diego Castellano
Age: 17, Grade: 12

School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Caprice Houston-Bey

Category: Poetry

A Stormy Mind

A Stormy Mind
Hamlet has had horrible happenings,  
The lifetime's worth of you and me.  
In stress, he was depressed and upset nonetheless  
With all that pain his tears fall like rain  
And while so young, what a shame.

Growing storms take their rage out on land  
Sick men without help don't get well  
Hamlet's internal storm was never tend to  
So into a deeper hole he fell

His father dead, mother re-wed, such stress on the brain  
Tragedies like those would have anyone lose their mind  
His father dead, mother re-wed, no wonder he’s gone insane  
His mind has been drifting further with every tick-tock of time

To learn his father’s death a planned coincidence  
He knew his uncle had no innocence  
Showing a play to see if his uncle committed murder  
His mother cried with guilt, he had proof when he heard her  
So sad, Hamlet's mind was the cream of the crop  
But it’s now mentally insane from bottom to top

His madness ended with his life  
Due to the poison of a knife  
His suffering was put to an end  
After he gave his last request to a friend

He told the friend to live  
The tale he must tell  
Of the mishappenings that had taken place  
Of how the kingdom of Denmark nearly fell.

He was then released of his madness  
It had happened at his demise  
Hamlet was finally sane  
He now had no one to tell him otherwise
Tangent Opposite

Tangent Opposites

The cool of the waves
The fire by the seashore caves

The beam from the flashlight
The darkness from the night

The judge with the mallet
The offender who stole the wallet

The dog on the mat
The very sleepy cat

The boy who played with a truck
The girl who thought all guys were yuck

It's funny how these random opposites
Turn out to be tangent composites!
Lonely on Christmas Eve

Elise Chei
Age: 13, Grade: 8
Home School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: REBECCA KIM
Category: Poetry

Lonely on Christmas Eve

The streets of the city were crowded
As they always seemed to be

Strangers hurried past
Carrying parcels of unknown things
Christmas Eve was lonely
And lonely only for me

No one waited at home
To greet me with smiles
No cheerful fire was in the hearth
To warm a poor man's fingers

I trudged down the street
Bumping into various shoppers
No one seemed to care about the lonely me

Then I saw the person
Sitting all alone
The loneliest being I ever saw

Then a friendship kindled deep inside my heart
Who needs a cheerful fire
When I've got a friendship that'll never tire?
Tissue Issue

I sat on the sofa
As the TV turned on
The news channel was about masks
Not again, I thought
Then the topic changed
What could it be?
The cameras showed a Costco
The red and white building
There seemed to be hundreds of cars
And many more people
A truck was parked up front and filled with boxes
I leaned forward, surprised at the crowd
The boxes said clearly: BATH TISSUE
I laughed out loud
What was so serious that bath tissue came out on the news?
Then my smile disappeared
As I saw something dire
The truck owner was fighting with not one, but many
They punched and kicked and yelled and screamed
Reaching for the boxes over ten heads
I thought it was funny
But not anymore
I had never known tissue
Could be such an issue
The Scientist

DYSTOPIA
Open man.
Inside, there are iridescent slates of ideas, stacked like cells
Priceless moments, past, present, future
Sparks of our own selves

Each are lenses through which we view
Truths we believe
But one question lingers

Are these lenses our own?
How did they get inside this storage room
That is our mind?
Individual or Society
Who has the key?
Sew man up.

If you see the steel door to your storage room
Jerk open the handle and run out
You are in a hallway in a factory compound
With many more rooms to scout
Stepping outside of the factory compound

The factories extend to the horizon, always more to explore

Steel and hardened,
What distinguishes one factory from another?

Run to the coast, where there is a patch of sand without factory
Beside you is another person, and you two are about to rewrite history.

“Why is my room like yours
Though we can be told apart?”

“We both exist separately
Two beating hearts.”

“Look and see I’m not you and you’re not me.”

“That is experimentally clear, through our differences in speech, which postulate differences in thought.”

This person is stocky and unthinking
But what am I then, void of creativity?
I have ideas, but you see,  
I will waste time and energy if I write them all down  
But please don’t take my stubbornness for passivity

I will to do, not to will  
Not to entangle words in a sentence  
But to entangle ideas in a creation  
Entangle problems with solutions, endless

To crack the puzzle of what new fascinations exist  
So the current world moves further  
And scratches items off man’s bucket list

A creator is a narcissist  
Who puts himself above dictionaries, references, and flat TV screens  
He is not higher or lower than others  
But he is different, and wonders if his friend will know what this means

Such talk is heretical and  
not welcomed by the factory

Back in the factory, practice makes Perfect, and then Perfect makes his son practice  
Barring those who aren’t perfect from advancing their sons’ package  
more modest than the package a few bald men bestow  
With their technological empires we’ll never truly know
Kaylie Cossman
Age: 13, Grade: 7

School Name: Somerset Academy-Losee, North Las Vegas, NV
Educator: James Lippit

Category: Poetry

Photo Poem

When you think of big city
You think of people
Out and about
Doing their tasks for the day
Or just enjoying their lives
That is unless
There’s a storm
I don’t usually like to go out
I like it inside
I dislike being around people, It’s too loud and I know it’s weird that
I like the storms after saying people are too loud, What
I mean is that
I enjoy the other things
You may be thinking, "What about a storm is there to enjoy?"
You were probably taught to stay away from storms because they are dangerous
You may think I’m insane
Well, that would make two of us
What most people will not take the time or
Simply can’t take the time
To notice
Is that everything about our world is absolutely beautiful
Most of all
I just happen to like the storms
I like the clouds that cover the sky
I like the blue and sometimes green or purple colors that form up above you
I like the wind that seems so aggressive yet graceful in its own way, the figure skater of nature
I like to observe how the blinding slivers of light contrast with the tall and cylindrical buildings
I like to breathe in the fresh air that makes it feel like being alive for the first time
Sometimes I go next to the water and sit on the sidewalk just to see the waves move
The water hits the objects in its way
A really dramatic debate
After a while, my legs get cold from the concrete and maybe I’ll continue walking
Or maybe I’ll wait
Because
Out here I can be free to do whatever I need
The sound of the thunder is loud
I don’t usually like loud noises
But
It all just blends together and creates it’s own song, with its own beat
The rain sometimes playing soprano
Thunder gives a sense of percussion
My favorite band
In war there’s pure chaos
and within chaos, there is order
Within order, there is peace
The only line between War and Peace is order
And order is one thin line
William Crawford  
Age: 17, Grade: 12  
School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV  
Educator: Christi Thomas-McEachern  
Category: Poetry  

"Tree of Growth" and "Act of Decay"

"Tree of Growth"
The strengthening of oneself.

The development of new tastes.
The pursuit of ones ambitions.
The formation of new traditions.
The acquiring of new skills.
The inception of new life.

The start of something new.
The refinement of ones own ability.
The ability to adapt to the unknown.
The extension of something old.
The constant changing of the world.
The design of new architecture.

The never ending competition with oneself.

The generation of new ideas.
The experience of new stories.
The conquest of ones self.

The exploration of new lands.

"Act of Decay"
The corrosion of art. The forfeiting of desire. The regression to a former state.

The act of returning to what was.

The constant state of decline.
The end of what was.

The lowering of intelligence.

The fading of the soul.

The withering away of accomplishment. The degeneration of traditions.
The final state everything.
The death of the living.
The rot caused by stagnation. The consequence of time.

The inability
to grow.

The abandonment of one's creation.

The abandonment of ambition.

The corrosion of one's spirit. The corrosion of bonds.
The loss of what was built.
Hannah Crowell
Age: 15, Grade: 10
School Name: Coronado High School, Henderson, NV
Educator: Jason Garner
Category: Poetry

Missing Winter, Backward Seasons

I.
“Harsh for Autumn”

A pocket of autumn
sways outside the frigid gates
of my summer subdivision,
trees the color of golden apples,
crispy leaves fluttering down
the sun-cracked streets.

My mom waves us under the trees,
a pack of Extra gum in her hand
as she snaps a picture of us
beneath petals of golden fire;
my sister and I wearing matching flannels
a poetry book in my arms.

11:28 am
Two more minutes we’ll wait
to see if autumn’s cold loosens
so the battery kicks up—
smells less like gasoline, should
be more like burnt cigarette—
like it usually does.

The breeze settles, we lurch forward
in our “battle-worn” 2001 GMC truck
in the heat of the sun
too harsh for autumn.

We drive on,
and I see the gray Gambel’s quails
a flock of them angling
sideways with their black-painted breasts
shooting in front of us as we drive by,
inches from the window shield.

“It was raining in Michigan,”
my mom says suddenly,
“your grandfather was complaining
about a woman driving
while putting make-up on
when he was still alive.”
You have arrived at your destination!

She backs the truck up
“watch out on your right hand,”
this is because the side view mirror
has been broken for a month,
“I can’t see the line,” she explains
when she inches to park.

“I can’t see the line either,” my mind whispers,
“can’t remember how gradient
the passing of summer to autumn,
this life to another, has become:
when smudged red lipstick morphed
into no parking fire lanes.”

Is this some backward grieving?
To learn to mourn for someone
I’ve hardly known all my life--
but everything hits me late,
especially missing others,
and even the seasons fall behind;
this sun is too harsh for autumn.

We park, truck shudders, settling,
“thank God we got here safely”
my mom breathes her sigh of relief,
and I know she means the truck
the battery, wet gasoline smell,
but I can’t help wishing
that the trees could be golder
for a little while longer.

Thank God the quails’ wings
beat faster than our truck
inches away from the windshield,
thank God they have the breath
of the wind lifting them up
and taking them across horizons.

Thank God the seasons
lay down this messy year
as softly as they could.

II.
“Cold for Spring”

It’s the black-plumed quails again,
those birds fluttering from
the neighbor’s yard--a family,
parents, four down-fluffed chicks,
a couple older ones, poking
through the cold, desert soil
for grass seeds we’d just planted.

My dog, waits intently perked-up ears,
curiosity incarnate at the glass sliding door--
the barrier between house and season.

Last summer I was in Michigan,
a different, fluffier, white dog sleeping
in a backyard glowing with fireflies,
sanded wood porch, midnight warmth
reminding me of a few small-town months
in my bright kindergarten year.

Summer rain, shattering road cracks, potholes-
back to the dashed white road lane markings
on highways, puddles of water pooling
next to airplane runways when we landed.

Last summer, this relative’s fluffy dog--
brightening up when we arrived,
dying in Florida a few weeks later--
the old shadow for the gradient
of golden summer birds
hatching in the same Michigan yard.

This spring’s a piercing desert sun,
contrasts to the Florida humidity
of where I’d be in a few weeks.

But this curiosity incarnate cannot be tamed,
so when the sliding door clicks open,
and spring breezes rush inside,
my dog zips by, jumps, pounces--

Snatches up its midday victim:
baby quail, gray down feathers
saliva-wet in my dog’s mouth.

Alive it twitches, alive
it plays dead shivering under
brown sun-scorched leaves,
spat roughly onto the ground,
practically abandoned by family.

I wonder how desperate,
how empty its mind ran,
hyper-focused, forgotten curiosity--
how breath feels under the panic
of hope, the feathered thing lost--
plucked dry and hollowed out.

How death hits you
when you’ve realized it’s (finally) come.

My sister pulls on latex gloves,
gently settles shuddering bird on the brick
wall separating cookie-cutter backyards,
its parents whisking it away
when we’re not looking.
I just hope my dad
won't let my dog
kill one of them.

III.
“Empty for Summer”

The summer’s heat bears down
stale, stifling, dollar-store fans beating
the sun into the fake wind
that quails could never glide on.
It’s an obituary page this time,
cold information piled neatly inside,
polarizing the stiff heat of the outdoors.

How come all I know
are his jobs, his mistakes--
highlight the most disastrous one
that I was always told to ask him about
but he never dared to explain--
how come all I know
is somehow less, stupidly more
than this impersonal obituary?

Nothing I know of
but soft Michigan rain,
jumping from state to state
kids without connections,
and the sheer luck of leaving
the military just days before
station orders to Vietnam--

That and his baseball cap,
boasting Vietnam-era veteran,
ever stepping foot in Asia,
covered in pins of his history--

Silver celebrating 70th anniversary of
the Manhattan project (I wonder why
this is here, perhaps a dream of his,
some huge, ambitious science goal);
copper engraved with the mercury test site
radiation, cancer; green-white button
of a 90’s NASA space-shuttle launch--

Kennedy Space Center, Florida
An hour from the heart of Orlando,
settled in the same state of this summer.

And back to the foolish feathered thing--
to the hope that clings to the edge of life--
what rolled through my grandfather’s mind
over the cliffside of death
when he had nothing to believe in?

Never Christianity which he rejected;
Stephen Hawkings instead, reasons this
universe, the evolution of planets,
every last bunch of quails,
is here, created--
meaningless.

The meaninglessness of sympathy cards
“it’s the thought that counts”
when you scribble a few words
into some premade, produced
thousands-of-me-out-there card,
pick something unique,
can’t decide, some first-world
problem, consumerist dilemma
over manufactured emotions.

The meaninglessness of obituaries,
icy memorials in the desert rain--
faint drizzle, barely dripping down windows,
gold-painted urn, no religion on the stone,
cold marble shelves stacked neatly.
It’s an empty summer I think of this
when he’s long been gone.
Day 943

My father carries the ancient ties of our heritage.  
He rubs the glass figurines with a piercing care.  
He said he cared. He said he believed. He said he was always there.

But, that cry that echoes down the hallway,  
that slam of the door that sped up the slow  
breaking the frame that he had longed to build.  
I tremble because my hands can’t hold enough  
of the shattered glass lying on the cold marble floor.

My mother still remembers the faint touch of his golden hands,  
but, the patches under her eyes have become caves  
that hold the memories that are too hard to swallow.

It’s been 942 days that I have been lying on this same floor.  
942 days since my father passed away,  
since my mother poured the last love sip into his glass,  
since my brother stepped up for him.

My tongue still burns from the pain.

And, it’s been very quiet around here,  
with a house that encapsulates me.

But, today—on Day 943,  
the strength is still within me;  
the fire is burning brighter.  
I reach for my mirror,  
frightened by the fact that even the touch of my gentlest finger  
will shatter the world into pieces.

I learned.  
I learned that he was there,  
but, not in any of the ways I wanted him to.

God once told me that everything happens for a reason.  
God, I stepped forward today. Thanks be to God
A Tribute to Nirupama Pathak: Dishonored Love

It’s this beating in my chest whenever
You tip-toe over this sanctioned
Body my mother nurtured and cleansed
The holiness inside of me.

Welcome,
My dishonor you stem from
The roots of the hands you
Intertwined every countless
digit: you lost me in math class.

I was surrounded by creations of
Parental animosity in the scars by
Caste or creed or dishonor
Or honor killing.

Mother burned me at the tip
Of my tongue you fractionated and
Father I felt the hair showering around
My body you first touched in the rain.

Mother, I am sorry for the love I
Wronged your ancestry and loved
Another who loved me more than
Mother, did you ever love me?

And father, I am sorry for the hands he
Invaded my body and the digits you
Taught me to count but not how to add
Two pieces of a heart broken by society.

Father, if you ever loved me,
Love me today and love me
Tomorrow in the blossoming of
These new flowers in the click of time.

Tomorrow is repeating the timeless
Soon to be counted digits of a new
Life that comes from the roots of our
Love that hopes to end the pain in my heart.
It’s this beating in my chest whenever
He comes to me seeking a new sunrise
But I must ask if mother and father
Will this be a new beginning or an honor killing?
in arm's reach

the locked bars surround me
overestimate my strength to break free
this blindfold covers all I see
but the replayed image of you and me.

the story goes like this
a story of an unforgiven list
every ounce of yeared bliss
with tears streaming in remiss.

my heart moved for you
now cracked into two
but as I wish to pursue
I am afraid I may fall through.

the fingertips I widen
still wishing over the horizon
a thirst to rise up and rise in
that I simply may fall into your arms to die in.

this may be my last chance to reach
cry an ocean for this beach
love this orbit once more for this freedom of speech
open this lock to unleash the dreams of you I must teach.
Love and War

Torment; a ship at sea,
untameable yet controlled
touching no rock,
no wind could shake it

Peace; love and war despised
The thunder could not force her out
No matter the cost,
she'd still be there

waiting, hoping
for a change
their love was unknown yet
it was strange

Not a soul saw the connection,
Yet they all saw the interaction
He was destruction and
She was the cleanup

He was war and She was love

She was the light in the
darkness, and he was the storm
My Name is Hamlet

My Name is Hamlet
My name is Hamlet, I’m the son of the deceased king
My name is Hamlet, I will get revenge if it’s the last thing
You may think I’m crazy, insane and mad,
But it’s not my fault that Claudius killed my dad.

My mother mourns my moped mentality,
She doesn’t understand the unsurpassed brutality
That Claudius has embarked upon our family.
I promise to seek revenge, I crave it like a snicker,
Satisfying everyone’s ravished hunger.

The prime time for the crime will chime sometime soon
However I can’t seem to bring myself to go all the way through
I killed Polonius, easy as can be
But when it comes to Claudius, my insanity won’t break free
Maybe suicides a better choice? I can’t seem to decide
For life after death can not be clarified

I suffer from melancholy, my madness consumes
It grows and grows as rapid as when a pansy first blooms
Like the sorrow represented by fennel
Or the affection of columbines
Ophelia’s flowers were her desires,
Stripped away by society standards
At first sight, I wished her coffin was mine,
For she was brave enough to do what I couldn’t:
She had the courage to end her own life.

Today I will fight Lartes
I will leave my fate to God
After everything I’ve witnessed,
I no longer treasure my own existence
My name is Hamlet, I’m the son of the deceased king
My name is Hamlet, I will get revenge if it’s the last thing

Crash! A body fell to the floor
But it wasn’t my culprits, rather my mothers corpse
She was poisoned, followed by Claudius and Lartes
I was the last one left, I said with my dying breath

War trumpets infiltrate the halls
Our bodies look wrong within the castle's walls
Now I will understand life after death
I felt despondent elation realizing I’ll no longer be depressed

Claudius is gone, he can’t do anymore harm
When the ear of Denmark finds out there will be great alarm
For the state is free, no longer rotten, rather sorry and unforgotten
The Tragedy of Ophelia

She was a beautiful lady
That was as delicate as a daisy.
She was a daughter, sister, and lover
Controlled by the men that were above her.

She loved Hamlet with her whole heart
But they were kept apart
Because Hamlet started acting insane,
And her father and brother told her to abstain
From someone that would take advantage of
Her innocence, naivety, and love.

Ophelia gave her ear to her father and brother
She decided to ignore Hamlet and suffer.

Her father then changed his mind
And asked her to follow the plan he designed
Ophelia meets with Hamlet again and has some remembrances to give back to him
But Hamlet insists he never gave her anything and continues to act grim

Hamlet viciously vented about virtue and virginity to Ophelia
He told her to enter a nunnery, and that to her he would always look down
But, she still harbored feelings for the one who was part of the crown

During the play, Hamlet hissed cruel and crude comments in her ear
She responded with wit and doesn’t submit to Hamlet

It was the death of her father that broke Ophelia.
Madness completely consumed her
And she couldn’t act naturally despite what other characters would prefer
Since it was the death of her father that broke Ophelia.

She gifted the other characters with flowers
And each flower represented certain powers
She passess out rosemary, pansies, fennel, columbines, and daisies
But she claims that she has no violets left and continues acting crazy

No other character understood what was going through her head
how crazy she actually was a secret she took to her bed.
It can be assumed that she felt completely lost without the guidance of her father
As she was her father’s puppet and she never had a mother
“To be or not to be, that is the question”
Was asked by Hamlet to a nonexistent personage in his state of depression

In answering the question “to be or not to be” she choose the latter
Since, like Hamlet, grief overtook her due to this subject matter
Her life was like a crisis till she died and shattered

She became so crazy that suicide was the only way she could escape
So she drowned herself in the river, but was cloaked in gorgeous flower cape

Ophelia couldn’t handle the loss of her father and lover
She was a victim of a cruel society that made her cover
Her true feelings and live a choiceless existence
Where women were expected to live their life according to men’s insistence.
It's Raining Melancholy

The house was warm
Like many others, it shelters from the storm
The fire, blown with ease, broke the home for me
Whoosh went the wind, thump went the rain,
My father is gone and I can feel the cold.

My home is haunted, hurt, hellish, and hostile
Mother moved on like she never loved
Claudius, your brother is dead, don’t you understand?
Why am I the only one mourning, it’s the answer I demand

May revenge outweigh the pain
I need to bring myself to end his vein
There is a war in my home and outside
My mind silently screams on edge of suicide

I’ve belittled my lover like throwing out a rose
Who is there to trust
Father your death is poison you were my rock
Who is there to trust
I have yet to expose the crown, I’m dragging on time is how the saying goes

Grief is the storm
Shattering the windows, breaking the doors
And with a broken home, it floods the floor
I seek to avenge but I wait for death
I am poisoned, shall I take my last breath
If my sadness was water, it would nourish the entire earth
Depression killed everyone while I constantly questioned my worth
my last letter

Genesis

Dirtied sandals slap
concrete floors
Conjoined with cackles
from sour shores
Wrinkled feet from
puddles and holes,
I leaped to face the deep.

We gasped from the same
freezing air, the moon became
headlight and you
pieces of prayer
Your white mellow grin vanquished
my fear to love, I now sit
beginning to weep.

Ignorance

We were children with
fears of conquering the waters
Both tied to a cathedral
love was made unthinkable, yet
you took a chance and tried to
communicate with me, my mind
to your dreams asleep.

As beautiful as you were to me
From your caramel eyes
to the attitude you’ve used to bring,
I’ve learned to trust my reasoning
(you were the first to find
feelings for me),

Revelation

First day swimming became
a memory, growing thoughts made you
lose more sleep, you scribbled
your feelings
on a sheet of paper,
a piece for me to reap.

Next day a letter was
delivered personally to me,
One in marigold orange wrapping,
Fiery embers were found
in my tears that day, I scribbled
my feelings for you to keep
(Your letter still between the
pages of my bible).

Attachment

Chlorine stained swimming trunks
from I to you, I so drunk, under the
moon shaped bulbs that blinked some
more, greeting the light blue deep.

Dancing, flying through sickening waters
Eternally bonded us and each other
Our eyes one unlike our tongues dismembered
Laughter, our pool’s known black sheep.

Exodus

To know our lessons were
coming to an end
 Forced us to make promises
I could never defend
I wish I told you how I
loved every moment of it
But all I can do now is
write and weep.

You wrote your last letter
and handed it to me.
You hoped you weren’t
my forgotten memory.
You wished that we
were forever a we.
You left without a
letter to reap.

Regret

We swam, you left, and
gave us hopes of
finding each other
through envelopes,
we danced once more
and left to say
goodbye.
...
Swimming pools, now a
tragedy
The phoney sea our
shared memory
I wish I can go back to the
time when we
Leaped to face the deep.
Stephanos Fikru
Age: 16, Grade: 11
School Name: West Career & Tech Academy, Las Vegas, NV
 Educator: Ashley Nebe

Category: Poetry

frogman

Cold, dark metal heavy
under the tan spotlight
Held by a penniless man
now a centerpiece
now a limelight
Silence rich, excitement in the air
bleached by slow tunes
A masterpiece, a star in itself sinks
the audience, the man’s floodlight.

Life slows down watching
 ebony fingers sculpt a melody,
 Hands over hearts,
yesterday’s forgotten hip legacy,
 Time, a slug to the
foot taps of the concertgoers,
 Viewers, heirs to the
thrones of bystanders
that come and go;
blips of the night.

Tune lazy
a deep vibrato to the noise he brings
Theatre packed
listeners’ smiles held with loose strings
Stage large
mountain for the Harlem man
Low notes reverberate
a poor man’s horn,
croaked by a frogman
Jazz never for the audience
Never played without
a gravesite.

Ramshackle stage,
pebbles to the music man
Eyes closed
afraid to look
truth dresses as the bogeyman.
Stage too big for one
man to make harmony.
Plays for buried men
surviving bullfrog of his symphony.
Can’t do nothin’ bout
a missing birthright.

Crowd cares less about a
man with no melody.
Crowd cares less about
a thing like police brutality.
Families unstrung faster
than an ever changing octave.
Can’t be picked apart if
you ain’t part of the same
box of chocolates;
Yet the crowd do care about
the missing melodies.
Crowd do care about
their missing amenities.
Their missing harmony shone
bright under the stagelight.
Can’t do nothin’ about it,

Their solutions stuck between
their negro vicinities.
Noelani Garcia
Age: 17, Grade: 12
School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Christi Thomas-McEachern

Category: Poetry

“*The Comforting Moon*” & “*The Mocking Moon*”

The great white  
moon stares upon me.

The comfort that a warm milky glow brings  
heals the wounds that sting. A mirror and

The pale  
And sickly

waning moon  
judges me. Everyone

Darkness surrounds you, alone?  
Even in complete darkness

Even the loneliest  
source in the sky

there is a light. A light  
to guide and follow through.

Away frigid light falls  
upon me shivers.

May the hearts of the alienated  
be comforted by the luminescence

Even the loneliest  
sources in the sky

be comforted by the luminescence

Creator sparked the most cold and lonely  
Turns it back to my inquires

sky as bright and full of light. *Look closer and see*  
Everyone departs no matter

who you are.  
Look behind

The tiny sparks of companionship that encircles the one.  
Dot of inspiration lining the sky for reminders

To see it’s  
Bilious

sparks of hope for the survivors.  
Happy to shine its light on

Judging  
Face

the poor and  
What

great

A  
Hypocrite
Stella Garner
Age: 15, Grade: 10
School Name: Coronado High School, Henderson, NV
Educators: Laura Ciaramitaro, Jason Garner
Category: Poetry

**icarus**

i. the climb
the sun is warm. the sun is warm and bright and it fills you up, inside and out. the wind clings to your figure, perfect and beautiful in this moment. it strokes your skin. skin of cinnamon and the mane of a lion. on display for the world, let the world drink me in you are a god now, and the gods drink you in. they welcome you, you’ve made it. you’ve made it.

ii. the descent
the wind still blows, but the sun is different. much different. now you begin to notice the clouds. they’re stronger than the warmth of the sun. they cover the sun, like paper covers rock. paper thin skin. your skin feels colder, rough and pale. hair is falling out. you are falling out. the thought is there now - the thought of failure. no, no. put the thought away.

iii. the fall
it’s not a thought anymore. the sky is dark now. overgrown with clouds and you think, (oh god) you think what could i have changed? it doesn’t matter anymore. you now realize, as you try to shout, that you never had a voice. the creaking of the gates closing tight, and the gods aren’t looking at you anymore. they look past you. they look through you. you are gone now.

iv.
you are no longer icarus.
Stella Garner
Age: 15, Grade: 10
School Name: Coronado High School, Henderson, NV
Educators: Laura Ciaramitaro, Jason Garner
Category: Poetry

Specific Titles Collection

Lunch at 10:00
I do schoolwork on my bed a lot.
It’s almost like the work
Is slowly seeping into my sleep -
I take it on trips now, too.
This constant condition is suffocating.
The painting in the corner
(always unfinished)
And I live in the morning only for a coffee bottle,
In the afternoon for the people
Miles away from me.

Who do I get dressed for now?

My laptop never stops charging
And it’s fitting, because I never stop staring.
Someday while I’m nibbling some small thing
(for my appetite has disappeared)
I’ll feel something in my throat and cough until
Out of my mouth comes an essay to write

Go outside, take a deep breath and look up
But oh no
the stars are laptop screens now
a million meets you must attend!

and as my body drowns in the red ink, i’ll think to myself that
i honestly thought there’d be more to it than this

I Saw the Police at the Neighbor’s
We were a little suspicious when
A rogue hole appeared in the garage wall,
But I figured it was a pedal mix-up
(you never want to assume the worst).

Sometimes there are problems inside a house which,
Aside from the garage wall,
Would be totally transparent
A big fish lurking deep under the frozen lake.

And I think,
Everyone has their place around the respective house,
Ever-changing.
Are you the police today?
The car stuck in the garage wall?
Or
(god forbid)
Inside the house?

Now there’s moving pods in the driveways,
The hole is patched with wood.
Eventually you will leave the house
Feel the sun again.
You will drive away
(bumper intact and all)
And the police won’t need to arrive
Anymore.

_There’s a Garden Snake in the Bed_
From the first embrace,
The sticky ice-cream kiss that began the cycle.

From then I was chained.

Bound to an agreement I had never made,
A contract left unsigned.
Promises made in every language,
My name uttered like rotten honey
(is it even mine anymore?)

Whiplash from the constant turning of the wheel -
Over and over and
Where were my own hands,
My nightshade fingers which were meant to stop it all?

And now, in the shadow between consciousness and sleep,
I convulse under my sheets.
It’s all over now, I know it -
Nothing can hurt me anymore
(except the memories).

Clawing at my back and
Spilling angry, violent thoughts
Like boiling soup
And I want that _thing_ I used to know
Off the face of the earth.

I want my name, the very idea of my being,
Out of _its_ filthy mouth.
I am angry.
Angry at myself for letting it happen
Angry at that thief,
The arsonist of my temple,
And I shouldn’t have to thank anyone anymore.
Loss to Insanity

Bright days, with hope of a new and good future
Bright minds, that see so clearly but yet are blind to the profound sense
Dark days, with the dreary signs of a doomed future
Dark minds, that see the bigger picture with the intentions of revenge
Loss to insanity, the progress continues
Like an innocent dog with rabies, you cannot control the emotions it feels
Oh Hamlet! Oh Hamlet! Why are you so hurt
Why can you not express the feelings as the rest?
Oh Hamlet! Oh Hamlet! Why are you so silent
Is it because I am now the captain?
Furious every time he speaks
Like a murderer trying to make amends
His chipper sadness makes me sick
An anger greater than the devils
He wants to take action, but he is indecisive for no reason
Oh Hamlet! Oh Hamlet! What will you do?
The pain is too strong it is omnipotent
Am I better off dead so that the suffering could finally end
Should I stay alive, and seek vengeance?
If I do so, this would forever tarnish my benevolent self
I am contemplating, without the option to ask for help
Now is the perfect time, but he is in a conference with the Lord
Standing there with my handsome and charming sword
Will he go to heaven?
Will he even be dead?
I can’t risk these possibilities
Oh Hamlet! Oh Hamlet! What will you do?
My life is a black hole, the darkness never ends
The thought of light is unimaginable
Buzz buzz, my head is unclear
Lost and alone, out of touch with reality
My uncle, the crown now rules the working hands around me
When procrastination is at its finest, others are being harmed
I am a fool, without the knowledge of what to do
Changed as a person, taking my anger out on the weak
Scheming and Scheming, until the days peak.
Oh Hamlet! Oh Hamlet! Are you okay?
Who is Hamlet?
Aubree Gearhart
Age: 16, Grade: 10
School Name: Coronado High School, Henderson, NV
Educator: Jason Garner
Category: Poetry

Poetry

One Day

One day
You’ll be taking your last test
Have your last school picture day
Last fire drill
Last report card
Last homecoming football game
Last homecoming dance
Last school prom
One day
You’ll have your last young and crazy Friday nights
With your favorite people
People that you’ve made thousands
Maybe even millions of memories with
Memories you’ll never forget
One day
You’ll have to say goodbye
To those amazingly crazy people
One day
You’ll close your locker
For the very last time
Say goodbye
To all your friends
And walk out of those doors the very last time
With tears in your eyes
Crying
Crying because you have to leave
All of those people you love
People you’ve had the best times of your life with
And that hurts
So much that it kills you inside
So cherish every second that you have
Because soon it will all come to an end

Amazing

Life is too short
Too short for you to surround yourself
With people that make you feel
Anything less than
Jubilant
If someone does something that bothers you
Tell them
If someone pressures you into something you are uncomfortable with
Tell them
Kindly confront them about it
If you tell them and they continue to do so
Leave
Leaving is not a crime
Leaving and uncomfortable situation
Is not a crime
You are not in the wrong
You should never feel the need to please someone
The only person you should need to please
Is yourself
If someone doesn't like you for who you are
Then that is their fault
Not yours
Always be yourself
You do not need to change yourself for someone to like you
You are amazing

Society
We live in a world where if you say the wrong answer in class
You get laughed at
Where if you dress a certain way
You’re looked at a certain way
Where if you’re grades aren’t perfect
You aren’t smart
Where people say “you should lose some weight”
Or
“You should eat more”
Where if you don’t do the same things that everyone else is doing
You don’t fit in
Where if you aren't apart of the “in crowd”
You’re a loser
We live in a world where
No one else know what others are going through
Where if you have no clue where you want to go in life
You won’t have a life
We live in a world of constant judgement
We live in a world where
You’re expected to live up to others expectations
When really we should be living up to our own
We shouldn't be living by what other people think of us
We should be living by what we think of ourselves

To my future self
I hope that you surround yourself
With those who know you so well
Those who know how to bring you up
When you’re sad
With those who remind you
To be true to yourself
I hope that you’ve fallen in love
Not necessarily with someone
But with yourself
With the world around you
I hope you start saying yes more often
Instead of letting the idea of failure
Get in the way of things you could achieve
I hope that every day is an absolute
Adventure
I hope there is never a day
That goes by that you feel
You didn’t do your best
I hope that you become more confident
Most importantly
I hope that you are insanely happy
Happier than words can express

Anywhere

I think that every time you look up to the stars
It’s like opening a door
A magical door
That could lead you anywhere
You could be at any point in your life
Good or bad
Look up at the stars
Open that magical door
And you can go anywhere
Anywhere you could imagine
Your first snowy christmas
Your first big accomplishment
Your first kiss
The first time learning to drive
The first time learning to ride a bike
Your first baseball game
Just look up at the stars
Open that door
That magical door
And you could go anywhere
I Am A Black Woman

I am a black woman.  
My melanin is deep and rich,  
like warm chocolate and caramel candies.

I am a black woman.  
My kinky curly hair sits atop my head  
as a crown does,  
bouncing along as I stride with power.

I am a black woman.  
To stand up tall  
when others oppress me,  
and to challenge a stereotypical norm.

I am a black woman,  
with a heart of gold  
and a mind of steel.  
Worth more than rubies and pearls,  
I will not be undermined.

I am a black woman,  
and I need a black man  
to lift my head up when it’s low  
and to lead our family  
with dignity and respect.  
But how will I hold hands  
with a fellow black man  
if the people who are meant to protect us  
murder us in response to our skin?

I am a black woman,  
and I refuse to be silent  
for young black children  
and our black men.  
So I will say the names of those who fallen.

I will scream their names  
from the top of my lungs  
and on the tallest mountain.  
For I am a black woman  
and I demand justice.
Self Perception
Searching through the looking glass
for a reflection of a greater me,
seawater tears gently flowing
down my brown cheeks.
Adapting to a thought called;
Beauty.

Maybe it’s a destination.
Or a state of being
truly oneself.
Or maybe it’s how others
want you to be.

So I sit and ponder
the vivid twists and ends
of my warm personality,
Analyzing the worth
Of my self-worth.

Show a little love
for my delicate hands
and lofty bones,
and learn to treasure my
thin tooth gap and charming dimples
that reveals itself
when I feel utterly content.

For maybe I am incomplete,
and perfectly imperfect
is how I’m supposed to be.

Pretty Bird
The sun peaks his eager nose
over the horizon,
draping the big blue sky
in honey
marmalade
and gold.

The wind brushes through the leaves
of the willow tree
whispering its song of life,
sweeping through
the stillness of my soul.

Pretty bird, my pretty bird
Where are you?

Feeling the soles of my feet
caress the grass below me
as I read fairy tales,
nothing was a mystery.
While the hymns of youth were long ago
I find them again in you.
Although you are never
rooted
deep within the Earth,
I find your presence to be
freeing.

Pretty bird, my pretty bird
Where are you?

Unity
I want to live in a world where a black woman
can be at peace.
To pick up her crown and read,
to express herself freely and love ever so boldly.

I want to live in a world where a black man
can roam the streets and never be at a disadvantage,
where he can find his crown and identify himself as a King.

I want to live in a world where my future children
have space to live and learn with others
of all color hues
and wondrous minds alike.

I want to live in a world
where the sun is eternally smiling,
smiling down on me.
Where there is no brutality,
and no hatred or prejudice.

If we worked harder
to create a place like this, it would be
a never-ending dream.
Troubled Heart

My head or my heart.  
It troubles me within,  
For loving you goes against the will of my kin.  
My head or my heart.  
Whichever I shall choose  
It’s either my love or honor I will lose.

My family warns me against you,  
Saying your crown is far too high  
They forbid me from seeing you  
If only they could see our love through my eyes.

But recently  
Your love is a lemon,  
Either bitter or sweet.

Oh Hamlet, why do you do this to me  
You are as unpredictable as nature  
One second there is sunshine  
And the next it is thundering.

When you say those cruel words  
It rips my heart out  
When I go against our love for others ears  
It rips my heart out

What a beautiful tragedy!  
Now, both my love and my father are gone.  
My mind moves close to madness  
Sadness surrounds my soul  
And the glistening water below calls to me

Splash!
Ophelia’s Lost Identity

Pursuing precious, pure, perfect Ophelia
Hamlet and Ophelia have a bond that’s beyond the universe,
Or so she thought she had his heart.

Laertes and Polonius telling a tale
Of Hamlet not being honest
And their relationship will fail.
She was a wise fool for trusting what he promised.

Their love is a burning flame
and Ophelia is the one getting burned.
Without Hamlet’s light, a part of her identity is lost.
She was a wise fool.

She followed their advice like a duckling following its mother.
With Hamlet’s craziness and Polonius’s death,
O world, what did she do to deserve this?

Her life was right and she had insight,
And Bam! Now, she was lost in the night.

Climbing, touching the nettles on the willow tree,
The water called Ophelia’s name.
Ophelia is out of pain and now free,
Was she to blame?
my Elephant and me

Sighed Mayzie, a lazy bird hatching an egg:
“I’m tired and I’m bored
And I’ve kinks in my leg
From sitting, just sitting here day after day.”

four year old me squirmed in his arms
my big Elephant
my dad
held me close
reaching out
i touch the page with my miniature hands
look up and his young fresh beard brushes my forehead

reach out once more
turn the page
just like the first time

i
know
this
book
he knows this book

“I meant what I said
And I said what I meant...
An elephant’s faithful
One hundred per cent!”

though the book grew with me
we were forced onto different paths
it collected dust
turned blind to outside
but i was still there
watching what was happening to its reader from better times

a man lost to another world
though not one we could share.

the words he once spoke were replaced by . . .
and his struggle with . . .
and the Elephant . . . yes, the Elephant
i

know

this

book

but i can’t find the words
they disappeared with the time
that he faded away

the Elephant that held me transformed
into the Elephant in
every
damn
room.

i still can’t shake those lines
the ones i lived by
and internalized till i could
rhyme them repeatedly without reason

“I meant what I said
And I said what I meant...
An elephant’s faithful
One hundred per cent!”

i wish i could forget those stupid lines
forget dr. suess
and his stupid Elephant
and his rhyming lies
which i held so close they burned onto my little heart
searing a scar down the middle of its blushing red

there is no ice pack that will heal a burned soul.

but i pray
my hands clasped, head down
that his choice to leave me alone on this earth
was a choice faithful to him
i pray that my Elephant was faithful to himself

and though i pray
i still think to myself
that it shouldn’t be
it shouldn’t be
oh, it really shouldn’t be like that

it should be
an Elephant and his little lazy bird
Here Together,
and not just in words
**Comfort and Complexity**

**The Sun: A Simply Complex Necessity**

The sun had risen.
A new day had been born
I watched as the fiery ball of fury
Inched up above the flat skyline. It bestowed
Upon me a sense of pride and refreshment, a new day
With new responsibilities and challenges. It was good to
Feel that yesterday was in the past and I could forget about the
Struggles and challenges and focus on new, even more challenging
Tasks. Every time I had watched the sunrise I had felt a healing power
Like never before. It seemed as if all of my problems had washed away for
A fraction of a second. It felt like I was stuck in time, watching this majestic
Force of nature reveal itself to me. It was important to me to watch the sunset,
I felt like I was on top of the world. There were no need for cameras as the
Images were imprinted in my mind and will stay that way until I breathe my
Last breath. Standing still, silent, it was like reading a line of Macbeth,
The picture is so simple yet so complicated. At a glance it probably
Looked like nothing, other than a simple function of the Earth.
The Sun was what guided me through the day, it was
Omnipresent. Without the sun we could not easily
Function which would be undoubtedly
Unpleasant.

**The Moon: The Universal Comfort**

The
Moon is
Something unlike
anything I had
Ever seen before.
Unlike the sun
It will never
Disappear. I never
Even took note
Until I had grown
Older and wiser,
Because like the
Moon, we must be
Able to adjust on the
Fly even when we
Are not in the spot-
Light. Even when
the sun is shining
Bright, The moon
Never backs down in
   Fear. I feel a sense of
Comfort when the moon
Is out. Just like when
   I am surrounded by
Family and friends
   Without a doubt,
And just like
   That the sun
is out.
Abigail Harris
Age: 17, Grade: 12
School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Christi Thomas-McEachern
Category: Poetry

**Mirror: Negative Self Image, Body: How the World Views You**

Mirror, Mirror, On the Wall

She looks
through me, with
tears in her eyes. I can’t
help but ask myself, why?
I don’t know what I could have
done to hurt her. I’m sorry I say, but
she continues to tell me every single
day, you aren’t good enough. Her words
cut me like a knife. Please stop! I call out,
she doesn’t know she’s killing me. She
won’t listen and continues to weep. Staring
into me, her voice breaks when she says, why
aren’t you skinny, like the models in the
magazines? Go a day without eating, be thin,
be lean. You’re not pretty enough, and even
with makeup I see through your bluff. She cries
harder, with her eyes turning red. I’m sorry I
shout! But I can’t wipe her tears. She’s
breaking my heart, and hurting my ears. She
calls out again, how could anyone love you?
As she sinks to the ground, still gazing
through me, the words leaving her lips fill
me with pain. I hate you, I hate you,
she states in disdain. But here I
realize, I’m only a mirror. I reflect
her words, just like her face.
And everything I feel, she
must feel the same
way.

What She Doesn’t Know

She
doesn’t know
that she’s the
reason he gets
butterflies at school,
and talks in
class
in an attempt to
act cool. She doesn’t know
that her dog waits by the door, longing for her presence, laying on the floor. She doesn’t know that her parents want what’s best, because she’s their baby, even after putting their patience to the test. She doesn’t know that her laugh is contagious, and her wild is stunningly outrageous. She doesn’t know that her kindness is recognized, and to her little brother, she’s idolized. She doesn’t know that girls want to be her friend, because the love around her, she can’t comprehend. All see her as beautiful, inside and out. They adore her soul, without a doubt. She doesn’t know that society needs her, because her heart and mind are broken as sadness consumes her. She can’t see herself from an outside view, where she’s perceived as worthy, perfect, and vibrant too.
Pierce Herbst
Age: 18, Grade: 12

School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Caprice Houston-Bey

Category: Poetry

A Dark Night

Yesterday I was just a young youth yearning for new.
I lived a blessed life with everything one needs,
Family, friends, and so much love.
But where has love gone?

I managed to return home but there was a different feel,
It was the same air, only colder,
The same country, only darker,
The same roads, only rougher.

My father is now only a memory that I alone remember,
My mother is with me but I can not find her.
My uncle has replaced my father as the moon replaces the sun,
And it could not be a darker night!

When I saw the past my world broke more.
To find out that blood was spilled deliberately,
Made my living a chore.

Should I continue to live and love?
Or should I let life continue to rip me apart as a dog does to a dove?

I need to know the truth or I will go insane,
I will become a lion and watch with my mane.
As I watch I hope to find a sign,
That will tell me if it is time.

I know the truth now of what happened to the crown.
Swoosh! My heart was sliced in half,
And it could not be a darker night.

All of my past desires are gone with the breath of my father,
And my mind won't be distracted until my uncle lives no longer.
Love is nowhere to be found in Denmark.

Tragedy struck as I watched my mother drink.
My uncle has left me with no more love,
So I snatched love from him.

My father can finally Rest In Peace,
My work is done when I close my eyes.
And it could not be a darker night.
My pants are what holds me in, The way
It fits around my waist molds me in. Even
Tho the weather is cold, I hope there’s another
Person I can hold. I feel safe, yet there’s so
Much hate. Insecurity Is now my mate. The
Way my pants fit makes me love
My outfit. A crazy world out there,
Yet my prayers for the world are in
Better care. It’s hard to bare into
The pants I wear, when I have so
Many pairs. Pants make me feel loved
And the security of it is what I hold onto.
Many women in pants see the world
Without a glance. It’s what brings our
Confidence up including romance.
Without our pants, our way of expressing
Ourselves would never be a chance. This
Maybe God’s plan, although this
Poem could possibly stand a chance.
Pants is what we own it suddenly is a throne
Rain

Rain
I hate the Coronavirus!
I hate being stuck inside all of the time!
“I am going outside!”
I went out to my backyard and sat down on the green grass
Beside the yellow Lantanas, purple Sage bushes, and the Butterfly Irises.
About two minutes later, it started to rain.
“Oh, come on! This is Las Vegas!
It hasn’t rained for at least 200 days!”
I crossed my arms, rolled my eyes, and sighed.
“What could be worse?!?”

Drip, Drop

While deciding whether to go inside or get my purple and yellow umbrella,
I noticed the drops of rain mingling on my forearms with my light-brown freckles.
And next to me a patch of dirt began to dampen into mud, “Ew.”
I decided to tilt my head up to see if the rain
would be temporary or not.

Drip, Drop

I noticed darker clouds rolling in.
In the distance, thunder faintly rumbled. “Oh, great!”
Just then, I had a childhood memory of my friends and I
sticking out our tongues and tasting the rain.
So I opened my mouth and closed my eyes for a couple of seconds.
I felt the tickling sensation of the rain on my tongue.
And I smiled and giggled like I was a child again.

Dripitty, Drop

The gusty wind blew my hair like a kite.
It began to rain faster. It dampened my hair and clothes, but I... liked it.
I liked the feeling of rain on my skin and my clothes and my tongue.
I continued to smile.
I thought I hated rain?... But this... this is crazy!
My smile proceeded to grow as I sprung up and began to laugh.
I noticed the patch of dampened dirt had become muddy and I could not resist.

But suddenly, my mom yelled, “Come inside, honey! It is raining!”

“What?”
“You are getting wet! What is wrong with you?”

_Dripity, Drop_

I turned from my mom and stared at the mud with my eyes growing bigger.

“How, you are going to ruin your clothes!”

_I know._

And with a big grin on my face…

I jumped!
The Spider, The Web, The Winds

endlessly—

i envy, envy the Spider as he weaves
his Web of silken nothings, each
strand borne in solidarity:
equal,
interconnected,
united.

i revere, revere the Web as it draws hidden
strength from humble origins of wisp,
falling as one face falls,
rising as another face rises,
maintaining the steel balance of

one

i wonder, wonder what the Spider does—
omniscient, eight-eyed creature
dressed in night—as he
spies a gale of Winds that
endangers the integrity of his Web.

disillusioned—

does he frantically spin more thread,
cast a wall of flimsy gossamers
in a desperate dance to salvage
home?

does he pray in silence that the
whole will not fall to ruin,
that—although razed and ravaged—
a semblance of foundation shall
remain?

does he accept the impending destruction,
recognize the futility in defying what
present eyes cast as the sheer
inevitable?

alas—
these musings are ill-guided for
it is our Web which faces the
crossroads today—not the Spider’s.

i’m afraid, afraid that
the chasms have begun to widen,
the ties have all but severed,
the Winds have already arrived:

they threaten to tear us apart

thus endures the tragedy of
the Spider, the Web, the Winds—
a tragedy until it is we
who endure, facing the
internal tempest grown of our
division—endure, like resolute
cobwebs drifting in the
broken mind of union—
endure.
Ethan Hsiao
Age: 16, Grade: 11
School Name: Palo Verde High School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Shiela Berselli
Category: Poetry

it's hard to accept it.

Indistinct faces masked
beneath cloth visages:
it’s hard to accept it.
Tradition fading amidst
unprecedented times:
it’s hard to accept it.
LED interactions on
deceptively cold screens:
it’s hard to accept it.
Anxious questions of
“when will it end”:
it’s hard to accept it.
Feelings of alone,
even when together:
it’s hard to accept it.
Confined to a suffocating
bubble for days on end:
it's hard to accept it.
Blunt departures from
that which we love:
it’s hard to accept it.
Hoping yet fearing for
the touch of another:
it’s hard to accept it.
Futile longings for
forever-lost normalcy:
it’s hard to accept it.

A changing world,
a dawning age:
it's hard to accept the things I fear.
**Longing for Selene**

I wonder what causes the sky to be so bashful and timorous.  
Why is he not more proud of his vivid blue?  
Such a brilliant sight has no business shying away each night.

But not a day goes by when the poor thing doesn’t fade away  
With his cheeks all rosy.

Why, I’ve got it!

Perhaps the sky fears the radiant sun,  
For it is he who loves the moon as well.  
Perhaps the sky feels inferior to his elegance,  
For he glides with such grace.

Why, you should see the face of the sky when the ethereal moon appears!  
His freckles glistening at the sight of the maiden he longs for so dearly.
The Power of Sin

"Gluttony"
'gluttony'
America's unhealthy obsession
Money, power, food, beauty, knowledge, desire
All good in moderation, but since when is that practiced
insatiable, voracious, animalistic, unquenchable, greedy
Is this really how we aspire to be seen to future generations?
more and more is produced every day only to be devoured
we are prisoners to an ever-starving society, never satisfied
seeing everything we care about ruined by greed
no one to blame but ourselves, never changing
When will it be enough, when will it be enough
we destroy and conquer what doesn't belong to us
We are the “heroes” of our misguided history books
we are haunted by the constant rumble of starvation
We eat in order to distract what is eating us inside
Guilt, pain, sadness, addiction, trauma, anxiety, depression
Gluttony is nothing but a diversion from the inevitable reality
Constant stimulation will be the death of man, distracting
Distracting from the true evil, we can’t see with our mouths full
Fulfillment is an illusion. Forever hungry. Forever gluttonous.

"Love"
  Frightened          Vulnerable
  Safe and Comfortable Thrilling and Flirty
  Exhausting and Devastating and Unbelievably worth it
Getting to know someone is a process not many enjoy
But some argue it’s about the journey, not where you’re going
There is no right or wrong way to fall in love, nor one path to take
No one truly knows what they are doing, but pretending is common
Because romance is confusing and there’s no official handbook,
You may break hearts or get a little hurt along the way, but
It’s Nice to know that there’s someone out there for you
But there are some reservations that’s come with
You see your flaws from another point of view
It’s Scary to learn that someone can know
you better than you know yourself
You realize that you’re human
You make stupid mistakes
So do they. So what?
You don’t mind
That’s true
Love
Alley Accident

He had spent his last penny,
getting higher than Wendy,
may her angel ascend to the stars.

Sad little girl,
she resembled a pearl,
glowing bright,
she was but only a school girl.

What an accident,
what a tragedy,
"But it all leads back to me."

"No money for my honey,
she's knocked over like a bunny.
Everyone knows it was me,
yet with no proof, they set me free."

They avoid him like the plague,
they call him Old Man Greg.

The parents cry and beg,
it was more than a broken leg.

He sits on Edward Dr.,
repenting for his crimes.
Old Folk Home

Don't fool yourself,
you've overused the help.

You're a sad little tool,
sitting on the useless shelf.

You're broken down,
beyond repair,
you could practically disappear into thin air.

You are old now,
stone cold,
on the floor,
how?

Well,
they have left you there,
your family, 
the help,
the care.

Stay there, 
and wait,
you are already at your expiration date,
it's too late.
Iron Golem

You are a guardian,
you protect me,
but mostly the people.

Someone brought you,
for what?
To protect.

The undead,
the hostile,
they all try to hurt us,
but you don't let them.

You've been around me since forever,
before I existed,
ever leaving outside of the town.

The children receive poppies from you,
I receive cold stares.

I should have known,
you don't care for me,
it's the villagers you protect.

The enemy I'll become,
with aggression towards your people,
I feel your wrath.
The Dragon & The Mirror

**Dragon’s Wing**

A beast, a fearsome
dragon A hulk of beating wings
and veins An image of terror
Fear like boiling, roiling heat, searing hearts in cold, blank
flames A static noise of crackling, burning that rends the soul
like firewood in dull chitter-chatter
An old sturdy house of impenetrable
scales, a whipping tail and claw
The chink in its own armour hypocrisy, irrelevance
of conquest A dull and cold blade that’s multiplying, exponential
Expounding on lies and hate and the hate of those lies, horrifying, terrifying, unseemly
Unaffected by age and untouched
by the ground
The flame a dull heat tempered by time
Weapons unnecessary, obsolete in presence, irrelevant
A shade, a form, half-corporeal and blurred by salt and water
Because dragons don’t bleed crocodile tears, they feed them
Eating, chomping, consuming, guzzling by gallons
things misunderstood and confusion, mistrust a bitter, hellish garnish
Eating without breathing, mouth unopened in lust
A carnivorous consuming machine that hasn’t opened its mouth in years, an Ouroboros
Biting its own tail as people run screaming just from the shadow of its wings
Yet still growing and feeding in the chaos that raises it
Brandishes it Like a sword of cutting sound,
slicing quiet
No silence except for screaming
Unsubsidng A tide
Unebbing

**Mirror**

rorrim
Cold glass, cold frames, cold
light in a hard place
Reflecting
truth, refracting lies
A matter of perspective
Changing views and bending
thoughts
Each memory a ray of glass
Every event a warping shard
Twisting, bending,
into full reality and realization
Interwebbed, interspun, interconnected
A spider’s den of crossing cracks
Each cornered vertex an angled feeling, sharpened to the touch
What rounded edges and fractured spines spell out in piercing light
Light artificial and conceited, unbared and unbroken in its source
Striped by clear and metal clean and regurgitated, naked,
showing, seen
Perspective
Hard, and cold, and black like ice frozen over dark road and deep water, clear, conspiring,
inconspicuous, preying in calm and wait for something traction to pull the feet out from under Rock, meet hard place, face-planted and sliding on cracking ice, a plunge into freezing shell-shock, culture-shock, reality-shock, perspective, like knives, digging in and opening minds, hacking out falsities, mistruths, and lies, a deranged surgeon with cold butcher-knives and glass scalpels, revealing butchered insides left whole and unharmed in new light, perspective And glass, once smooth, and soft-edged, cracks, sharpened, and open-ended, fractured in a broken spinning cobweb, the fragments without the lies one tells oneself to feed its frame and smooth its bladed, jagged edges Perspective, reflected, Mirror
Mirrors

I walked into a world of mirrors
In which each showed a memory
A world of light, of endless sight
Each showing a part of me
That I had left behind

As I looked on, and in, and through,
I saw my past unfold
A never-ending kaleidoscope
Of all the stories I’d told
As I traversed through time

My face stared back, young and new
Reminding me of choices I’d made
Neglecting to show all of the thoughts
That my heart had then forbade
And cast out to the night

I walked on through a world of mirrors
In which each showed each of me
The previous versions, endless and old
Of every kind of me
That I had moved on from

As I looked on, and in, and through,
Their faces spoke in silence
An eternal myriad
Of internal peace and violence
That warred behind my eyes

My face grew tired, old, and shrewd
As my cynicism festered
My eyes grew darker, their shadows longer
With my patience always tested
As I longed to break free

I walked inside a world of mirrors
In which each showed my destiny
The choices I’d make, the hearts I’d break
Before the end of my journey
And the settling of my spirit
As I tried and failed to avert my eyes
My fate began to mock
The person I was, the person I’d been,
And the person I was not
And now could never be

My heart grew heavy, my mind unsteady
I did not want it to be true
That I’d squandered my life in rainbows of grey
To end up black and blue
With my colours all washed out

I walked out of a world of mirrors
In which each showed a fallacy
No eyes looking on could see within
No observer could control me
And I would choose my own fate
Waiting

I’ve waited for you so long
For the voice that’s become my favorite song
For the face that illuminated the room
For the smile that always spells my doom

I’ve waited for you all this time
For the warmth that makes my heart rate climb
For the hair that shone in summer’s light
For the eyes as brilliant as moon’s light

I’ve waited for you all alone
For the walk that makes the room your own
For the lips that draw my own in close
For the soul I swore I’d value most

I’ve waited for you night and day
For the arms that melted the cold away
For the fingers that danced across my cheek
For the prowess that always kept me meek

I’ve waited with you on my mind
For the hips that dances with mine in kind
For the hands that brought me back to earth
For the heart that showed me my own’s worth

I’ve waited for you patiently
But now you’re only memory
Hamlet Character Poem

Cunning Claudius

Claudius cunningly killed the King
For nobody wanted to sing.
King Hamlet we miss you dearly
And fear that next year God won’t hear me.
He preys, not prays, and breaks families away
For King Hamlet will not see another day.
He is the devil, his evil knows no limits
Don’t drink that cup, there is poison in it.
Crash! Bodies hit the floor
Quick, somebody close the door
Claudius is looking to kill once more
Like a child who despises their chores.
His knife does not believe in mercy
I don’t think you’d find him in a clergy…
One who is able to keep peace with foreign lands
But can't keep the peace with his hands.
Respected by many who don’t know the truth
Poor King, King Claudius.
His legend will live on forever!
Poor King, King Claudius.
Trevor Kovacs
Age: 18, Grade: 12

School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Caprice Houston-Bey

Category: Poetry

Tragedy of Ophelia

Tragedy of Ophelia

Torn between men, nor knowing what to do,
Polonius, Hamlet, and Laertes all reigning over her.
Opinion after opinion,
she is left to make her own decision.

At first virtuous, pure, and fair
Only to be cornered by her father, lover, and brother
Her head spinning like clouds above her
Her life is a tornado of emotions whizzing by her a blur.

Frightened by Hamlet’s madness and sickness
O’ Polonius controls her once again
Made to neglect and ignore the prince of Denmark
Here the character reaches the tip of the arc.

The Death of a father, two out of three,
Killed by Hamlet, left the brother with rage,
Heartbroken, depressed, and filled with grief
Only left with her brother she could find no relief.

Trapped in triangle of three men
The feeling of loneliness and hopelessness soon set in
A time of depression short but brief
Poor Ophelia could find no relief.

Death was soon knocking at her door.
Only to be welcomed by her own will.
She walks to the river and stands along the shore
Only to see a person not herself in the reflection.

Crack! The weight on her shoulders could be held no more
The noble family has stepped to heaven's door.
Driven into her own state of madness
O’ sweet sorrow This once fair and Pure maiden now filled with malice
With her sickness and madness, a desire to die had risen.
Oh by heaven's help! She is no more in between the guards of her prison.
Maya Lai
Age: 16, Grade: 10
Home School, Las Vegas, NV
Educators: Dora Lai, Dora Lai
Category: Poetry

A Scrapbook

1- Unknown Emotion
2- Tree
3- Written in the Corner
4- Last Photo

1- Unknown Emotion

The photo is bent.

I can see the lines
forming between my brows.
My head seems to have this unexplainable urge
To tilt—slightly—to the side
as my gaze clouds.
Everything is distant,
I’m frowning and I know it.

I didn’t want to frown.
My mouth is open but
I’m not speaking. Perhaps the
world doesn’t deserve my
words. For what words do
I have to give? Air rushes through
my nostrils
and as I let it out slowly, I can see
my posture in the reflection
of the closed door—looking like
a wilted flower. I remember those kids
who used to laugh and spray gatorade on
flowers. Am I drunk on gatorade?
Straining for water to clear my gaze.

A blank look,
a slack expression.
Late at night—for it is always night I do this—
I stare at a blank paper.

Until my petals quiver because
I do not know but I used to remember.
2- Tree

In this picture I am a tree.

I remember the wind sighing on my face, my arms holding up the cotton ball sky. I remember my leaves soaking in the sun as I reached up to kiss her red lips— knowing that if I were to actually do so, my world would be charred to bits.

I remember the willow bending over the creek. The fish jumped out of the crystal water, straining to hear him speak for his rustling would not puncture their watery domain. I remember not understanding the wisdom from the willow, yet hungry to listen all the same.

I remember the race in height with my brothers and sisters. The race in which the crickets judged with high pitched chirps. I remember being swift in sending my roots to ground deep in the dirt for I was the tree who wanted to win the race.

I remember all of these things and more than I can ever dream to forget. I remember being whole—a life form with a purpose to embrace the Earth and lift up the sky.

3- Written in the Corner

My heart wanted one way, my brain wanted another. I seemed to have no say—not a single word—in their discussion. I could only listen.

_I make the decisions for all of the problems._

_I feel the pain for all of the problems._

Back and forth my brain and heart argued to no end. Neither of them took hold of Responsibility for the problem at hand.
The problem was this icky goo, adamant on tearing the brain and heart apart. And so, this goo kidnapped Responsibility and held her in his grasp.

I had nothing to do with it, I swear. Yet I didn’t stop him.

My brain and heart decided to split. To walk miles and miles apart. To run away from Responsibility. And soon the heart grew heavy—yet the interesting thing—the brain couldn’t care less. I seemed to have no say... I could only watch and listen.

And as I listened, a new voice spoke. Responsibility? She was speaking to me? She said, “You can do more than listen, if you set me free.”

So I hacked at the goo with all I had. It was the first time I could without my brain and heart arguing for dominance. Fine, thin, lines of light started to flow back to my soul.

I had forgotten. I have so much more to go.

4- Last Photo

In the background we see exposed mountains of no color.

In the background of the picture where I am standing vulnerable for the first time.

Have you ever had a friend who says “Trust me” and you do, but you know you shouldn’t. And she sneaks into your ways and disrupts it and tells you “Listen to me” and you do, but you know you shouldn’t.

The sickness disguised as
my friend disguised as a vanity similar to
a mountain dressed with powerful trees
rooted in its skin with neon sticky flowers
covering it from head to toe—
What mountain has flowers covering it? What
mountain needs to be pleasing to the eye to be strong? What
mountain is poisoned with the flowers
humanity smell and decree them “oh so sweet”
when I—

I stand there, and take in the smell of
sticky rotten neon flowers
and wish for the lack of smell
that follows bleakness
because I know behind the false
sweetness… there is pain.

In the background we see
a mountain with no flowers.
Beautiful and strong, it is not
staggering under the influence
of a poison like I once was.

In the background of the
picture where I am standing
vulnerable for the first time.

Please do not crease the photos—
they are part of the story that is life.
Jasmine Lima Truong
Age: 13, Grade: 8

School Name: Thurman White Middle School, Henderson, NV
Educator: Leslie Gates

Category: Poetry

Spectale

a sketch of the world from an out of place soul,

take me back, take me back, o fragment of beauty!

-

i.

you're mature.
yes, i was born to be.
i spilled out of my mother's
womb with bruises on my knees,
danced across our one-story home
hand-in-hand with a father who
had not thought me good enough,
i am what happens when
a child is created in the absence
of love.
how do i rise from
the emptiness i was born in?

ii.

how do you,
oh, sweet nectar,
deceive me (unintentionally)
in the most foolish of ways?

i sit at the
crook of your ankles,
eating up every single
crumb that falls from your
god-given lips,
my lap, dampened by
the wetness of my tears,

in the absence of you,
i let my brain fall
further and further
down the rabbit hole

iii.
finding contentment in misery
is like finding a lone flower
in the midst of a forest fire,
somehow we manage
to find beauty
in the chaos that engulfs us

iv.

why have so many of us
admitted to
uniformity?
i cannot do many things,
but of what i can,
i vow to myself that i
will not submit to the
arms of those envious of me
i tell myself this like a prayer,
i might suffer,
i might break a million times,
but i will not be bored.

v.
someone, somewhere
said that routine was good,
so,
your days consist
of rotting in
your bed sheets
and soaking in
cum-water,
watching the
world burn around you
you don't feel,
yet you suffer,
a lavender of mania and
misery,
but it doesn't
satisfy the same
as complete numbness
the world you used
to find beauty in
has turned bleak
where did it go?
-

my child, you were meant to suffer as you do; bring forth love to the world in spite of your misery.
Alec Ly  
Age: 18, Grade: 12

School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV  
Educator: Caprice Houston-Bey

Category: Poetry

Poem

Grief Always Consumes  
Death has a toll to pay  
And has left a burden on me;  
My father, was a great man  
As great as you can see  
My mother, on the other hand  
As clumsy as you can be  
She has hurt me from the above  
She carelessly doesn’t think about me  
My friends are nuisances  
They tend to get in the way  
They don’t care about my feelings  
I want to stray away  
The world is falling down  
And I am going with it  
I tend to be alone  
I find it quite exquisite  
I’m filled with sorrow  
The pain in me grows  
Death has consumed me  
I wish I can go  
Let the reigns go  
Everyone be free  
The new world is here  
So bright and green
The Insanity Plea

The ghost tells Hamlet of his father's death,
And Hamlet has hate for his uncle.
Anger will surge within and now he plans to purge
If only you knew for his hate will emerge.
As the lively death creeps the gloomy night
5
It waits for time to go out like a light.
Stab! Polonius drops to the floor so poor
For the crown such a great burden he bore.
On a journey Hamlet shall go,
He will grow like a willow tree. 10
On a journey Hamlet shall go,
Learning of true intentions, crazier he became.
Returning to the land where it all began.
Taking on his enemy through reason and rhyme
Anger controls the many and insanity controls one
15
One mistake after the other,
Death appears and consumes them all.
Like grains of sand all are gone.
What is Achievement?

To achieve is to win at life. To win a prize, to win money. To win a trophy or a Medal. To achieve is to accomplish a life long goal or to Accomplish your daily tasks. The effort, Courage, And Desire it takes to achieve something is not easy to come up with. To achieve is to feel complete.

A Failure

To fail is to feel empty, to feel confused, to feel Worried. To fail is to feel being judged. Judged by your family, your friends, and most importantly, yourself.

To fail is to be scared to win. To fail is to be incomplete. To fail is a failure. But, to fail is to also get back up again and try harder. To fail is...
To learn the most important lessons in life, try harder!
Mark Meiszburger
Age: 17, Grade: 12

School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Caprice Houston-Bey

Category: Poetry

Ophelia Poem

Ophelia

Silence, so still yet also screaming
Don’t you think it’s interesting?
How one could sit so still and act so gleaming,
As if love wasn’t so far fetched and so far seeking

For the love i hope to give is pure, not a blur and to be spoken without a slur
Not one that is born and then torn
Without any indication of marriage to be sworn
For our love should be like the sun
Promised like god to rise again
And to be born with new life
Yet without this guarantee a new question arises
To be or not to be?
Am i too blind to see?
I must ask myself, what is the purpose of this life

If not to be cherished by another.
Another born from a different mother
Not a brother but rather a lover
Is it to suffer?
This question I wonder
Is it to suffer?

Should I end this bane of existence?
Let this gift from God go to waste?
As i look down at this brook below
I consider acting with haste
And perhaps leaping to get a taste
As to what will come to these tribes
Of this once great Denmark.

The crunch of this branch that I ponder on
is all that divides me
For this branch, like my Charon
And this brook to become my meadow
Thus confusion becomes clarity
I am blind, yet i see
Death becomes funny
And my life turns from tragedy, to comedy.
Shape poems

From looking at a tree, one can learn so much about life. All parts of a tree is what makes it beautiful and unique. Every leaf. Every branch. The roots. The stumps. All. It's like a family. A community. Every single part of it. Makes it who he is. Every branch connecting the leaves. Every tree is unique from others yet different at the same time. But a lot of trees together create a beautiful field. All the people in the world make this a beautiful place. All people are distantly related. The strongest foundation provides the strongest structure. Everything stems from something.

One singular leaf. All alone. Falling into an endless abyss. Is is winter time, when all the other leaves are falling too? Or is this one alone. Lost separated from the whole. Isolated. Broken. Unable to find its way from where it came from. People can have the quality to stupidly assume they can do. Everything approximately perfect. But it is.
Not
Possible
"Barbie"

You know that girl, that blue eyed barbie
The one who is always the life of the party
The one without a care in the world
The one who is always unconcerned
She’s the girl with gorgeous sunshine hair
When people pass they always stare
I wonder what it’s like to be that girl
Do you live the life of others dreams
Or is your life not as it seems
Your always smiling but is it real
Or is it just a show and no one knows how you truly feel
When you go home is that smile still there
Or is it washed away by a flood of tears
Are you as close to your friends as it seems in pics
Or is what the outside sees solely a trick
I’ve spent my life wondering these questions
Wondering what that “perfect” girl feels
Do her problems go away just because every guy falls head over heels
Or is it just an illusion of others minds
And she really is just like the rest of mankind
The Girl in the Mirror

Through the mirror stares a girl
Brown hair, brown eyes, her hair in curls
She's a stranger to me
I get closer to see
A familiar face but who is she
Tears fill her eyes as she begins to cry
But she doesn't even know quite why
Alone with thoughts of heavyweight
She starts to pick through all her traits
She looks at her body and her face looks defeated
She begins to wish that her fat could be excreted
She thinks of the grades she once got in school
A straight-A student who had run out of fuel
Atlas I realize this girl is my reflection
I don't want to be the girl in the mirror
Being that girl is my biggest terror
A year ago a smiling girl could be seen in the reflection
Satisfied with life she was able to show herself affection
I often think about that version of me
The girl I saw had seemed so carefree
Nothing could hold her back as she always had hope
That girl I knew would never stand there and mope
That is the girl that I want to be
She seems to be so truly free
Shape Poems

The Shade

I make
a big splash.
I sink into the warm
ocean water and hold my
breath. The whole world goes absolutely
silent. I come up, seeking for a breath of fresh air while
the world gets loud again. Kids yelling and playing while saying how
happy they are to be where they can be themselves, with no cares in the world.
I dive back down into the water and see a fish swimming by my feet. It appeared out of
where, looking so sweet. It swam away, rather quickly. I was about to get out of the water when
a new creature showed up. It looks mean and mighty. I’m frightened and god almighty, it was a shark.

Fearful,
I run
out
of the
water
back to
the
warm
sand
that
touches
my
toes.
I feel
the
sun
rays
on my
skin,
letting
it soak
in and
feel
safe
again.
The Serene Snowman

My ears started to freeze as the winter breeze blew through my face. The purity of powdered snow made me feel safe. Sitting down, with the beanie on my head, and snow board on my feet, I was now ready. Click click click. I secured myself in my boots and stood up. Gazing upon the steep mountain side, I turned my board and there I went on my ride, in fresh powder, floating freely. The feeling was liberating and I felt safe once again.
Allan Morones
Age: 18, Grade: 12

School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Christi Thomas-McEachern

Category: Poetry

Oppositional Shape Poems

We Remember

Memories
I remember a glorious, time,
Where Christmas time was normal.
I remember the holiday cheer, ear-to-ear smiles and,
Resounding laughters that fill all rooms like a might boom;
It was a time of family where negativity was never welcome.
I never grew worrisome, because I had all I needed: my family,
I had no campfire, but being with those I love gave me warmth.
Sadly, this year, there will be no family Christmas for me,
There will be no party, no hugs, no games, and no trips.
This is the sad reality of mostly everyone this year;
All normality has completely disappeared so far,
And although we may not see each other,
We can remember the time,
When it was safe to embrace.
Remember that December,
3 months passed September,
When all was normal.
Never forget the time,
When all was sublime.
And when you want to bawl,
Remember, that you have it all.

Forget: Lose the Negativity in the Clouds

Forget,
Forget the struggle,
The dark times of despair:
It is not fair to let them lurk in the air.
Forget the pain of 2020 and hope for a better future,
But remember, that God will sustain us and hold our hands.
I encourage and implore you to no longer dwell on those days of loss,
That perhaps made you feel not so well as the worst is now in the past, hopefully.
Attempt to abandon in the past the intense agony as it does not do anyone any good,
To remember those events that cruelly kill the mood of positivity, joy, and everlasting hope;
I yearn to forget the crippling feeling of isolation, frustration, and seemingly eternal hopelessness.
All that the human race has the power to do is to look to the future and pray to the Creator to alleviate the disease;
The disease is not a mere illness: it is outright hate, prejudice, financial and economic, inequality, and harsh rhetoric.
Negativity is an enemy of all of humanity, and together we must bring an immediate end to this disease and seek a new future.
All-mighty God, we the people cry out to you in desperation for help to end the suffering that has been inflicted upon the world;
We have full faith in you, and we will live according to your great and everlasting will as you are merciful, kind, and loving.
I seek to have those days long gone from my life, and although I cannot remove them from my memory, I will keep living.
Dwelling on the past pays no bills, but living a full and happy life is the best for all of us as we are unable to change the past.
However, my brothers and sisters, remember those who guided you and never abandoned you as they are true gifts from God.
Together, we can hold each others' hands where we can journey together to a brighter tomorrow, and we can forget despair.
Ethan Nguyen
Age: 18, Grade: 12
School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Christi Thomas-McEachern
Category: Poetry

Human Emotions

“The Painful Truth”

I feel
All alone,
Only despair.
I am drowning.
My mind is violent,
But my screams are silent.
I am fighting against myself.
They say happiness will find you,
Yet they are never there to uplift you.
I fall deeper and deeper into the darkness.
I love the emptiness, but I hate feeling empty.
The night is my friend, yet sleep is my enemy.
Even when daylight emerges, I am surrounded
By darkness. I hide the pain with a false smile,
While I spend my time with family and friends.
I am consumed as I drift in a sea of tears,
And realize there is nothing for me.
A heavy burden weighs me down.
I am on my own.

“The Joy of Life”

Life is not Perfect. It is filled with Flaws and pain. Yet, I choose To search for all the small things I can cherish and enjoy. The feeling Of love and joy flutters inside me. Happiness is more than an Emotion we embrace. It is Is a choice we can live By. We choose to

Laugh and Smile. We choose to Cherish our time A dark day can be
The ones we love.
Turned around with a simple smile from
The happiness of others.

Ness that contagiously spreads to others.

Filling our lives with joy and love is all
We have in our short lives. Rather than stealing it away,

Let us share this feeling of joy and happiness
Because we must remember
Life is short.
Ophelia character poem

Ophelia Poem

O poor soul who was lost to sheer madness,
Surrounded by schemes,
Consumed by men’s sadness.
Once awed and charmed by Hamlet’s words and wit,
She was merely a pawn,
She was forced to submit
To the whims of three men
Who led her astray,
Sealing her fate for Death’s dark, dismal day
But before that day came,
She was soft, she was fair
Untouched by men’s troubles
Swept up in Love’s prayer
Her brother was bound away for adventure,
His life guaranteed, replete, full of splendor.
He warned her of Love’s dangers
To be rid of king’s Son.
But Love had encaged her
Her Fate had begun.
For not too soon after,
Death came with a hiss
Through the lips of her father,
Who would ensure the Abyss,
In its blackness and coldness,
Would descend down upon her
With nary a corpse.
Drowned in deep water.
With the warning laid bare
That she’d stop with Love’s games
She’d suffer no stare,
Ignore Hamlet’s claims.
Throwing letters and gifts back to their sender,
Hamlet soon gripped by madness
His heart much less tender.
For when the Players came playing for the court and the crown
Hamlet came preying, a meal to be found.
Like a wolf, eyes aglow
With Hate and Deceit
His hunger would grow
Into Vengeance complete.

He poured Loving poison, deep in her ear
Jesting and jesting, yet she’d only sneer.
And retort and return the Wit he had offered
Yet he’d only laugh at, tease her, and scoff her.
She’d cry out to the Heavens
For Poor Hamlet’s sake.
For he had been lost
In the shadowy wake
Of his dear father’s passing by the hands of king’s brother
Who now had the throne and had married his mother.
In silent chambers stood son and his mother
Yet in that same room there hid yet another.
The young girl’s old father, had hid there to spy
Yet had sealed his Fate, too soon he would die.
Hamlet’s blade was thrust through his gut
And Ophelia’s Fate
Had now been shut.
Possessed by clear visions of imagined things
She walked through the halls
A young voice that sings,
Of Love’s triumphs and woes
A heart had turned bitter
Stuck deep in grief’s throes
Where she’d fester and blister.
The Snowball and The Aisle

The Aisle
Walking down the aisle
Everyone looking at you
Searching for the one thing you want
No one expecting you would resort to this
You find it.
You do what needs to be done
You walk back down the aisle
Everyone looking at you
You run down the aisle and out the door
Everyone begins chasing you
You try not to let them catch you
You take your seat in the back
Everyone is celebrating
The driver turns back to look at you
Gives you a stern face
And finally tells you
This is what you’ve come to?
Shoplifting?
You reply
Today was my big day
One way or the other.
Now you walk down the aisle
Of a courtroom.

The Snowball

Snowball
Oh how I miss the snow.
The snow has covered the cars.
The snow which came from the stars.
Snow is so magnificent it’s even on Mars!
The way it falls in such a particular way.
Is sure to brighten up anyone’s day.
I pray for snow everyday.
Oh how I miss the snow.
Snowball
Evan Ogilvie
Age: 18, Grade: 12

School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Caprice Houston-Bey

Category: Poetry

Control to Chaos

Control to Chaos
Perfectly planned, the king is dead, 1
Long live the king. His plan becomes reality. 2
Celebrating the wedding pretending 3
Like he didn’t just kill his own brother. 4
Coyly coiling his grip around the throne 5
As a snake does to his prey. 6

Claudius remains in control. 7

Concocting, coaxing Hamlet’s friends to spy. 8
War averted, plan was a success, relieved sigh. 9

Claudius remains in control. 10

Another plan, hiding, watching, listening 11
to learn the truth about hamlet. 12
Later, panic surges through Claudius’s mind 13
At the play that hamlet has set. 14

The worried Claudius now roars and demands the play to be stopped. 15
The schemer has now lost control 16
as he falls into Hamlet’s trap. 17
In the castle, he cries out to God to help him. 18

Claudius begins to lose control 19

The snake now creates a new plan to deal with Hamlet 20
An effort to regain control of the unstable situation. 21
Sent away to England, he can longer cause trouble. 22
Once in England he will be killed, 23
Finally putting the king’s worries at ease. 24
However, Hamlet is a cunning fox. 25
He once again disrupts the king’s plan 26
And returns to exact revenge, 27
Causing Claudius to hatch another plan. 28
Frantically conniving with Laertes to get rid of Hamlet, 29
They come up with a plan to poison him by sword or wine. 30

Claudius attempts to retake control 31

Hamlet is called to join the rest of the court 32
Facing off against Laertes, 33
The plan to kill Hamlet is almost complete. Then bam, chaos ensues. Things look like they will go Claudius’s way. Then bam, chaos ensues. The scene that follows is a massacre as death is everywhere. Gertrude drinks from the poisoned cup. Laertes cuts Hamlet with the poisoned blade. Hamlet cuts Laertes with his own poisoned blade. Laertes reveals the entire plan to hamlet. Hamlet then stabs Claudius and forces him to drink the wine. Everyone lies dead. In the end, the great conniver died by his own plan. His schemes fell apart and his loss of control was his downfall. Claudius has lost control.
Spoiled Crown

He’s to heed the hindsight of hysteria
Enclosed in being exposed
Will Hamlet be the end of me?

I shall never see Hamlet deranged in front of me
Caught dead, wouldn’t be, praying to He
I shall never see, me on my knees
For I would never let my sins free

My ill will of Hamlet like a Monday morning
My black heart to only seek good intentions for he
In England for he will be
Polonius will seek for me

Lend me your ears Laertes
For this plan you’ll want to hear
This to be your only choice
Into never hearing his rattle voice

The foil calling his name
Crown to be the death of me
Hamlet to sip from the tip of his lips
I shall never see Hamlet deranged in front of me

For his life overturned to mine
My soul still dark and wine
For he has my life and his is mine
**Down Goes Hamlet**

Down Goes Hamlet
Hamlet has come back with the passing of the crown
A land now, Lord Hamlet hath been slain
His son now upset, is stopping for nothing!
Like a cheetah in pursuit, he seeks revenge.
Horatio and Hamlet having a vision of their own
A ghost from the past has appeared to them so
Hamlet enraged has come up with a plan
A lion locked on nothing can stop him.
Reality slips away at every waking moment
Every time the ghost comes back a little of Hamlet is taken away
Each day eats away at his conscience
Slowly stealing his style.
Falling far from his family,
Hamlet happens to hurt more than he intends
Acting in raging eagerness
Polonius falls in cold blood.
An avalanche sliding down a mountain
Hamlet is a flow of emotions
Unpredictable he takes down anyone in his path
Not seeking for remorse, but seeking for destruction.
Nearing the end of the mountain he begins to slow down
While he starts to use his brain, it is far too late!
   With a clink, two swords met for the epic final battle.
   It’s a battle to the death, with no mercy to give.
His fate has finally come
And the deed has been done
All the men have fallen
And the story is finally done.
The sun is burning hot again but these walls have trapped the cold. Marking the days since normalcy is getting old. How long will this hurt last, magnified by isolation. We need more people showing kindness in a lonely broken nation. The streets are empty of cars, kids, and the air is stagnant. Park swings are left at rest as grocery store clerks and nurses on the front lines run rampant. Children are scared and looking to their parents and doctors for answers. Stuck at home, a part of history with no place to roam. Our economy is crumbling but it will bounce back. We are fighting with an invisible enemy, but we are ready to attack. We must believe we’ll come together again so we need to have each other’s back. Stay home for the doctors and nurses, parents and teachers. Stay home to protect yourselves because you don’t need to play to be in the game just sit on the bleachers.

Reading Headlines
Numb but it hurts to be. Sometimes the past makes the future too hard to see, but you persevere and around the next corner is a little taste of greatness. Just enough to keep you going. Just because you’ve seen the ground doesn’t mean you’re not courageous.

Strangers Again
I wish I could articulate the truth in your eyes. It’s as if you knew me long before I put on my disguise. Did you know me long ago when things were peaceful? Can we travel to place so much more blissful? Now the past is riddled with defeat, trauma, lies, and my love we’ve got the ladder. Bitten on both cheeks and thrown away again like we don’t matter. Let’s search for each other in the rubble.

Benjamin Button – Song
Well you took the pictures off the wall where they once used to hang.
Brought your scissors and some tape packing everything away.  
I wonder when I’ll see the person, I used to see.  
With everything gone I just have our memory.  
Do you go back to the days that were great and we had just started?  
Commitments far away after you first darted, now that we have our careers will we ever meet again?  
I hope to see the boy you’ve become a little now and then.  
Benjamin, Benjamin button  
Benjamin, Benjamin button  
Benjamin, Benjamin button  
Now he’s left us yeah, his gone without a single trace.  
Not a symbol of his love not a hair in the drain, I wish this house smelled like it once did, I wish I could see your face; I wish your love did what it once did, and it took away the pain.  
Do you go back to the days that were great and we had just started?  
Commitments far away after you first darted, now that we have our careers will we ever meet again.  
I hope to see the boy you’ve become a little now and then.  
Benjamin, Benjamin button  
Benjamin, Benjamin button  
Benjamin, Benjamin button  
Benjamin, Benjamin button  
Benjamin, Benjamin button  
My Benjamin.  
Took the pictures off the wall where they once used to hang.  
Brought your scissors and some tape packing everything away.  
I wonder when I’ll see the person, I used to see.  
With everything gone I just have our memory.  
I just have your memory.  
I just have your memory.  
I just have your memory.  
I just have our memory.  

1. Anxiety

My heart feels broken but I never felt the break.  
Walking around with the pain and everyone’s baggage by mistake.  
I cared too much for the revolving door, but the doors stopped swinging open and now I don’t know whose been let in.  
I don’t know where my walls have been.  
I just want to remember those doors, and what it felt like to let them swing.  
Are you waiting outside?  
Should you be?  
Did I fall apart again?  
Was I stupid enough to let you see?  
Again, and again I’ll build my strength, and I’ll walk up to those doors and fall to my knees.  
Why is this world so hard to please?  
I wish you could see me without words, at least the ones I speak.  
Then, the possibility those doors will open again wouldn’t be so bleak.
Exploring Isolation

Missing You
I can’t see your smile
Can’t hear your laugh
Can’t feel your hugs
I can’t smell your wrath
I can’t taste
Your poetry,
That I used to love
On my lips
On my lips
Are the countless conversations
Remarks
I had vowed to tell you
Before the next year,
Now shriveled up,
Like my lips
And my body,
My soul,
And my mind
Clearly it seems like we’ve
Run out of time
I can’t speak
To you
Or anyone
Because isolation
Has engulfed the nation
Not only because of the crisis
But because we cannot devise
A better plan
Before our other plans
Are left demised
I never even had time to say goodbye
Before you were gone
Before I was gone
Before
The world
Was gone.
Before we had time
For a second chance
Before we had time
For one last glance
Before all fell apart
To countless pieces;
A jigsaw that cannot be
Rearranged.
All our problems
Thrown into the problem pile
Because we have bigger problems to deal with right now,
We have to walk
A few more miles
To get out of this crisis
And find ourselves in a new one,
Bigger one,
Because we didn't solve the first quite well.
Well,
Oh well,
Now the miles we’ve walked are gone, too,
And I don’t even have
Your smile to see
Your laugh to hear
Your hugs to feel
Your wrath to smell
Your presence to taste,
As we continue
Our evolution
Independently...

Remembrance in Time
These were the people you loved,
The people you knew would always be above
Your worst, unfortunate days

And that one day you’ll turn back and gaze
At those that were so close, yet so far away

And with great benevolence they acted
And never did they speak malevolence

And were those whom you admired
And you wished, and dreamed, aspired
To one day become one of their kind.

And the fear of the eternal mitigation
Of their kind and tranquil passion

Would feel like an infernal irritation
To your heart’s own simple passion

Though irrational the horrors were,
You never really found a cure

Until one day those people that you loved
Were gone forever,

And you realized that not once you recognized
The fire in their eyes,

And how much they loved you back
Until a time you never could turn back,
And every minute past you spent with them
You worried, worried and worried away...

Stop Fitting In
Depression
Oppression
Injustice in session

Formed outside of the norm
Grown to form my own ‘self’

I perspire to inspire
Aspire
Set fire, fly higher
While you change your soul’s attire
To fit in with the liars

You express to impress,
Faking out your finesse
Yet you rest below best

I know who I am,
But do you know who you are?
I serve to go far
While you get eaten alive
A dull kind of ‘star’

And why?

Because you hide behind your concealer

You shadow your secrets

Your foundation is truthless creation

Abrasions

Lining mistakes with intention
Building up tension
Moral infection

Devotion
Led by emotion

Emotion

Emotion

Emotion

I think, I don’t feel
Drama leads your appeals

Feeling leads your life
Sadness is rife
A double-edged knife
Rejection
The Earth is too beguiling, O Moon
And I hate to burst your bubble,
But the world does not revolve around you
The planet’s dancin’ ’round, what a scene
But you’re orbit’s outta sync and
I’m afraid that you won’t ever meet
The Earth has got that sweet spot
Not too close,
Not too far,
Never too cold, not too hot
And if you had the right distance
You could cover the difference
But she’ll never really ever love you back
So just leave it to the others, O Moon
Or else they’ll come to burst your bubble for you
You’re pretty far off target and you’re moving away,
You’ve got a bright side and a dark side
But you only ever show just one face
Meghna (Chili) Pramoda  
Age: 13, Grade: 8  
School Name: Davidson Academy Online, Reno, NV  
Educator: Tracy Sangster  
Category: Poetry

Poker, Mask of the World, Lex Talionis

Poker
I hung above the burning cross  
I almost took the knife  
The wolves howl to the black ink moon  
The forest full of strife  
They’ve taken all I’ve ever had  
And so I’ve thrown the dice  
But now I think it’s time to go on  
There is no point to life  
I stood in an eternal prison  
My hands bound to the wall  
I watched my whole life go by in a second  
I watched it fall and fall  
Down into the undergrowth  
I crawl around in tears  
I watch the dirt cover my hands  
And see the end as it nears

Mask of the World
Carpe diem they say  
As if it means something more than plucking 24 hours out of a week  
Seize the day like it’s a duck or something  
Make the most out of every day  
Like we’re going to manufacture some sort of something  
To make everyone’s lives work

Something isn’t quite right though  
Only pots of gold come from the ends of rainbows don’t they?  
People tell me to love everyone, no matter how big or how small  
As if size, shape, and color don’t matter at all  
People wave rainbows on flags  
So then maybe they can celebrate all colors too

Milk cartons say cows are grass fed  
Why wouldn’t they be though?  
All cows eat grass, we all know that  
At least that’s what we always thought  
That’s what we were always taught  
So why is it just not?

Everything happens with a little click  
Click on the button, Click again, CLICK  
As if clicking brings us together
Cause in this day and age we keep a distance
But they tell us everyone needs assistance
To follow their dreams

They tell us be who we are
Don’t care what others think
Girls can have short hair and guys can wear pink
But then why do people look 75 different ways at us?
When we’re wearing the “wrong” color
Maybe their mama never taught them to use the whole box of crayons

And what is this nuclear bomb business?
Maybe it’s what they do in 8th grade chemistry experiments
Like to spread radiation
Radiation of positive vibes
So we can all be happy and live our lives
You know?

And why are adults so obsessed with donkeys and elephants
I think they’re both animals and mammals at that
Maybe it’s part of the save the sea turtles movement
From this so-called “global warming”
Like doesn’t the sun warm the earth every day?
I don’t know why people are so concerned about this daily temperature cycle

And there’s this new thing called coronavirus, no known cure
Kills the old and kills the poor
I guess it basically combats world overpopulation or something
No one knows where it came from
The sun has this layer called the corona
Maybe that’s where the virus comes from, although I think it’s much too hot

People eat burgers and people eat meat and end up not being able to fit in their seats
Maybe we should all be vegan or the other
Apparently deadly diseases like Cancer kill people every day
Since when were stars so aggressive?
Although I do suppose they are burning balls of gas
I guess someone bothered a crab

Something doesn’t quite add up about all this
Something is strangling the beauty that once bloomed throughout earth
Or maybe I just always thought it that way
The earth is beautiful
Or maybe not
Maybe the world truly has problems
Maybe that’s why people want world peace
But there isn’t any war is there?
So why do people want the fighting to cease?

I guess maybe one day I’ll find out
When I grow older
When I can bear the weight of the world on my shoulders
Questions will be answered I suppose
But in the way you least expect
People call it a loss to grow older
I’ve always wondered why
And so I heave a great sigh
And go on with my merry life
With something still being wrong though

**Lex Talionis**

Hands tied and mouths agape, they file in row after row, like a never ending sea of orange. They trail behind one another in a trance, hands out in front of them as if they are looking for something gone long ago. Bottled up in a cell with curved edges worn out like a dull whetstone, each grabs the shoulders of the ones nearest to him, searching for any sign of hope in the others’ motionless eyes. All of them know why they’re there, but not a single one remembers how. Each goes through his excuses: I was framed, I was forced, I was afraid, I don’t know. But none can come up with a plausible excuse to justify their crimes, and their lives, and the reason that every tick on the clock is a second closer to death. Their death, at the seat of an electrical box just opened, at the mercy a coil that sucks the living breath out from inside them, at the hands of karma. Murder.
You, Yourself, and You Only

I. You remember
When we said we loved each other
Only you meant it
Did you know that even months, years, decades after we broke up I kept waiting for you to
realize that you did love me and to come running back?
Well there you have it. I did.
But now I’ve grown old and I’m tired of waiting
My face has wrinkled
And my once jet black locks are now graying

II. You see
All along I kept thinking that I wasn’t enough
I wasn’t good enough to be with you
Because girls like me weren’t supposed to date guys like you
And then I used to console myself by thinking that you did love me
So even though I was rich and you were poor, and I was a Hindu and you were a Muslim
Love knew no colors or boundaries
But now I think I’ve thought and realized
You never loved me
It wasn’t worth it all those times I cried

III. You think
Every girl on this earth will come running after you
You look so cute
Act all sweet and perfect boyfriend image
You were the one who broke me
Tore my heartstrings out from inside me
But what you didn’t think about was that not all of those girls would stay
Live and love you for another day

IV. You know
If you had thought about the other eight billion people on this earth
Had tried to think about what you could do for them
Maybe you wouldn’t have lived your life the way you did
And still do
Maybe you wouldn’t have a reputation
As a playboy who ditches for novelty
Who tosses girls around like items on a conveyor belt
That is lethargic and doesn’t have girlfriends
But has dates and hot ones at
That who used the word “I” in every other sentence you spoke
But you didn’t look once for any repentance
Didn’t try for any flaw acceptance

V. You are
You only care
about you, yourself, and you only
And maybe, that’s your destiny
Maybe it’s your destiny
to think about you, yourself, and you only

I Wonder: The Girl Next Door
I wonder if he still likes to sing
The old and long-forgotten love of my youth
My sweet summer plaything

I wonder if birds still come
Nibbling off of the rusting bird feeder
My little morning drums

I wonder if the willow tree still grows
The leaves tickling my window panes
My gentle compass rose

I wonder what happened to the girl next door.

She peeks her head out of the window but covers it with the curtain
So that no one knows but her that she is watching
Her eyes are bruised and glassy
And she sits around in those baggy jeans and oversized shirt
I see her scrawling words on the window with an orange crayon
She used to eat by the window but she hasn’t eaten in 3 weeks
Her skin is paleing and sallowing, stretching over her thin bones like a spider web
I can almost see the blood through her veins turning cold
I think she’s waiting for something
But I think she’s gone insane waiting

I wonder if I will ever watch that way
Peeking out of the window
And covering my face with a curtain

I wonder if I will ever go insane that way
Scrawling words on the windows with crayons
And starving myself for 3 weeks

I wonder if I will ever wait that way
Wasting away like a leaf floating forever in the wind with no place to fall
Hoping that something will come to take me away

I wonder what she’s waiting for.
I wonder what is worth waiting for.

I wonder if she's alive.
I wonder if she’s dead.
I wonder if she’s still waiting.
I wonder what is still worth waiting for.
Zeev Premer
Age: 17, Grade: 12
School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Christi Thomas-McEachern
Category: Poetry

Yin/The Orchid

We are all
alone in the moment.
Each of us focused on us.
All of us facing disappointments.
And then we adjust. It will
always feel like you are alone
in the wild, brushing off the
shrubbery. As you move through
you will find yourself turning away, draped in mud. The more you move,
you taste your blood. But upon a
clearing you make a discovery.
We are all together in the
moment. We are focused but still
together. The
mud is shared and so is the blood. We are all sharing the moment,
painted and soaked.

We
are not
the same.
You are not
where I am from. Although
I may be stronger than you, you
may be sharper than me. We are different and second to none. I am the shepherd.
You are the butcher. Together we feed the beggars.
I look for my future, you look for yours. You are determined. I am docile. You are restless. I am calm. But both
of our blood runs viscous and red. Our blood is the same
but the jeans we hand down are washed and worn. We
each have to provide our bread, both of us with people
to mourn. As the years go we stare into the at our
past: individual and isolated. In the next life we shall both be shepherds, and both be butchers. The bread we provide can sustain all the world. We are not the same. No one is the same. But the shepherds and the butchers share their roles.
**Sofia Reynoso**  
Age: 15, Grade: 10  
School Name: West Career & Tech Academy, Las Vegas, NV  
Educator: Kathrina Schmidt  
Category: Poetry

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**The Way I See It: One Girl's Perspective**

“An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind,” Gandhi said,  
A man who created peace from the ideas in his head.

What if he saw us now, divided into colors,  
Would he wonder how we got here? Would he let us suffer?

Wise souls have fought for this nation, their intentions quite fair,  
M.L.K. had a dream, but we became his nightmare.

Why do we only see difference, only pay respect to our labels,  
For example, stories of unity sit under fables.

We are described as black, white, pink, beige, and coco,  
But those aren’t personalities, those are colors in the rainbow.

People are much more than the color of their skin or the uniform they wear,  
We are all human beings with a voice we want to share.

We tried to whisper, but no one heard,  
So we shouted and you paid attention, but what was learned?

Blind rage and violence encourage movement but only out of fear,  
So are they actually listening, or will this happen again next year?

Racism isn’t a part of our genetic code,  
It’s something that’s placed in our environment, as Jane Elliot showed.

If you learn to write the alphabet wrong, you can be retaught correctly,  
So let’s help others right their wrongs, and attack the problem directly.

To the people of color, I will never fully understand your pain, this much is true,  
But I hear what you are saying and will continue to stand by you.

There will always be rotten apples, but never pick them over others.  
We must show each other empathy as if we are sisters and brothers.

Hearing the scared words of injustice truly makes my stomach churn,  
But if you fight fire with fire the only thing left to do is burn.

We the people are punishing the guilty, as we should,  
But we’re allowed to press pause and appreciate the good.
Change requires time, effort, and must come from within,
Because a long list of little victories is an overall win.

I hope my words help build a bridge over the void,
And I can’t alter the past but this is for you, George Floyd.
Curbside Therapy

Here I sit on the sidewalk, I come here everyday. 
I sit and I listen to what the grumbling pavement has to say.

I fancy the sidewalk because I know it will never leave. 
Its blood runs gold with ichor, at least that’s what I chose to believe.

This sidewalk provides me with stability when everything around me seems to spin. 
It lets me rant about my wretched days and never chimes in.

The pale cement paves a path for my journeys but always carries me back home. 
It makes me feel as though I am wanted, and slightly less alone.

But as fantastic as this sidewalk is, on it, it is still me against the world. 
When I am sitting down, my thoughts start to scream and my true colors are unfurled.

Here on the sidewalk, I can only sit and watch as the spiders of my past come crawling. 
I get trapped in my own fear and am a sitting duck for the ghosts of sadness to come calling.

Because from my place on the sidewalk, 
All I can see is the leftover gift wrap of people’s unappreciated meals. 
All I can hear are the angry caws of the seagulls that nest in the buildings around me. 
All I can smell is the sweet scent of revenge as mother nature storms the city with sour rain. 
All I can touch is the dirty pavement on which lost souls have wandered. 
All I can taste is salt as my psyche drowns me an ocean of my emotions. 
And all I can feel is the heavy pit in my stomach as it reminds me that I cannot outrun my own mind.

Here I sit on the sidewalk, I come here everyday. 
I sit and I force it to listen to what my inner demons have to say.

The sidewalk cannot protect me from what I feel or take away the stabbing at my heart. 
It cannot promise me peace as the balance I’ve strived for begins to fall apart.

The sidewalk can only lend an ear and let me speak when I am distraught, 
That way I can continue to find my way here and sit on this godforsaken sidewalk.
Reflections as I Wander

As I trail along a field of flowers
I come across four in particular
I can stare at them for hours
To find time for them peculiar

My eye catches the lavender of the rosemary flower
As I stare deeper into color—
I reflect on the words of Father
I know, I know!
I never challenged the grey beard, and yet,
I had everything to challenge in mind
I truly am a puppy dog to my father
Aren’t I?

Soon, the wind picks up,
Leading me to a patch of pansies
Filled with unique colors,
Each pansy I picked put purity
Into my mind
Oh, how I wish I could share these pansies!
So strong and at peace with themselves

Whiff! As the wind blew,
Oh! My flowers nearly flew
What is that? Columbines!
Its bright yellow stigma stuck out far
As if it were calling for an answer
But no soul knows where they are
And yet, it still gets the most pollen.

My mind is to my commander,
But my heart beats for a different love.
My face flushes as he touches my heart,
Whereas the other builds and begins to kill
Oh how I wish to have, without cost, a love!

Here, the winds strike my face
And the flowers picked last, held in my hand
Are fennel and daisy
Oh beautiful flowers! Do not shrivel in sorrow,
But rather preserve innocence

The field I’ve roamed has nothing more to offer
But glistening water in the distance
I knelt towards the end of the river as I mistakenly
Drop my flowers, all four
Realizing that I am just like this river, now with
Floating rosemary, pansies, columbines and daisies
Oh, but not to forget, the yellow fennel as its hue
Fades and becomes a bit hazy

If only to be as calm as the river flows of flowers
No one acknowledged what I seeked, so I found myself
At the creek.
RISTOW, BRAYDEN

Brayden Ristow
Age: 17, Grade: 12

School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Christi Thomas-McEachern

Category: Poetry

Science v. Politics

The light bulb
What to see, what to do
Sometimes it is really hard to think through you
Creation, life, the many many mysteries of why: ever confound me
Together we figure them out and free ourselves from what truly bounds we
Why, what is the point
Existential crises cause a emotional breaking point
Discovering what we did not know and scaring one another out of our comfort zone
No one said it would be comforting challenging our own ideas
But alas, looking deep in the mist
Lots of joy come through when you add something to the we know it list
Just a bunch of monkeys in the middle of this vast array of space
Learning, conforming, and getting smarter every single day
Conquering the sky, land, and everything in between
Using our language to explain what we mean
Again why do it you may ask
To be cemented as
The best this earth had ever had
Discovery and innovation will continue to do its job
Just remember
Everything is theoretically impossible, until it is done

The tree:
Creation
Corruption
And overall destruction
Separation of people through superficial manipulation
Blood against blood in a war between an elephant and a donkey
Ever wonder why we just to come together as a family
Dissenting opinions and stubbornness to learn
Cause a contrast in what it is to be a good human
Closed minds shut doors
ironic how the founding fathers compromised for the overall good
Faction and ideology parties
Should not augment how you see your own family
Open your mind and your heart to learn and listen to one another
Nothing good in this planet has ever came from hating each other
Rather:
Collaboration
Innovation
And hearing one another out
That is the true and only way that
You and I will be able to see one another and get to go out
Milia Rubio  
Age: 17, Grade: 12  
School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV  
Educator: Christi Thomas-McEachern  
Category: Poetry  

Oppositional Shape Poem  

“It Must Be Love”  

Do not look what is on  
the outside, but begin to search  
what is felt inside. You must truly know thy  
self to begin to love your self. When you feel that  
you are unloved, remember that love is not over. Never  
feel that finding enjoyment is like looking for a four leaf clover.  
You must search for the object needed the most not the one that is wanted. Although life may be hard at times, always  
remember that everyone matters. You matter. The gift of being able to give other people warmth, is a special  
present that is unique in everybody. We have to take advantage of this gift, so that we could spread it around the community. Everyone is the same, we are all equal, so we must treat each other with adore and respect. Live your life to the fullest, not to make others proud, but to do it for you.  
Just love yourself.
Riding the Wave and A New House

Riding the Wave

A separation from the
Crowd, the changing of tides
Every wave batters my porcelain eyes, filling my lungs and veins with seawater. I am but a simple grain of sand,
a speck of dust, a mote of light in a beautiful infinity
Tied down by nothing more
than the laws of the universe itself
And yes, the water is deep and cold
And yes, many dangers rise from the bottom I cannot see,
But a risky passage will be well worth the warm, fruitful shallows
I am called home to

A New House

Opening the door of my life
So many rooms, so many painted walls
So many shattered windows, posters covering dents
in the drywall, pages and pages of words unsaid scattered across the library floor. As I slide across the smooth floors and look at the open windows, I wonder how it might feel to exit, not through the open door that I am being guided through but rather through a rough, jagged escape where I can furnish my own rooms
Karsyn Sadler
Age: 17, Grade: 12
School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Caprice Houston-Bey
Category: Poetry

Character Poem

Oh, Oh, Phelia

Ophelia, open hearted, open minded
Ophelia, O taken blind by the love present
A liking disliked by her father including her brother
Afraid of his daughter being used as a sex object by the Prince

A love born is now burned
Scared to death over the obsessive Hamlet!
A craziness takes over her mind,
Because she was ever so blind
She will never get over this in a million years
She yearns love sick

Ophelia the drug addict
The needle is her heart, “bump bump”
Her needle holds her captive
She starts off full and ends up starved
Her love is like drugs

A wise fool she turns into
The lessons she learned is vital to her make her new
A lover from Denmark she will always remain
But this specific love of Hamlet left a stain
Joyful Grief

Joyful Grief
Father is forever forgotten, facades fail to fade
Father is forever forgotten, the story never conveyed
He was slain by his brother
And no one told my mother.
The stench of betrayal lingers in the air,
But it seems I am the only who notices, the only one that cares.
My thoughts are all over the place and I am questioning if I am sane
But the only emotion I feel at the moment is my overwhelming pain.
Ahh! My mind cannot find reason
How has no one noticed that this is treason!
The crown is corrupt, yet he holds the hearts of many
They give their hearts to this man, almost as if they are worth a penny.
Without a doubt, these hearts are in danger
It almost like giving them to a stranger
The crown is corrupt, yet he holds the hearts of many
I must seek my revenge, for he hurt my father plenty.
Oh how this death taunts me
How sweet this long sleep would be
But I must avenge my father, and kill the current king.
This is joyful grief, I will enjoy what it may bring.
Lunatic Dove

Lunatic Dove
Oh Ophelia, obsessed with the one and the only oligarch Hamlet
You were scorned and forlorned,
until your heart was torn.
You loved and you lost, though your father’s words came at a cost.
From the warmth of your tears, to the coldness of the stream,
Your love washed away along with your dream.
You drank far too deep, and now you are in a sleep.
All you wanted was love that was lost,
And it came at too high a cost.
Blind to your fathers worldly advice,
Brotherly words failed to entice.
Crazy you went, after his death.
Cold was the tomb that took your breath.
You fell into madness,
Like a drop in a well.
Your visions of heaven,
Drove you closer to hell
Wailing and moaning, you lost those you love
Then danced and sang songs, like a lunatic dove
Your love for Hamlet burned like a wick,
It flamed and died, like Claudius’ trick
Cut like an artery, you went out quick
Gone too soon, and that was it.
Adventures on the Court

Hardy  (1st Poem)

The sky unfurls strong sunlight across the bulldozer of my visor.
Bold white lines prowl the court
slithering around my ankles.
My mind darts forth strategies slapped upon my shoulders
by coaches, assistant coaches, and wannabe-Dad-coach
as I awake to cold sweat on my bedroom floor,
counting my sins:
 skipping practices,
  pushing planks while munching M&M’s,
  letting the other player take me out.
I look twice down the court
and squeeze the dimensional ball
 fated to rip the limit between Player and the played,
  slamming against two walls of polyester strings
      that tied a stretch between Dad and me, as I
  hunger for Instagram and Snapchat,
  ways of a normal teenager,
      over the molded athlete wavering
    under the height
     of the season.

I lunge forward,
my calves burn,
those that sacrificed on the wax floorboard repenting
with squats so deep they bent dreams of
 someone Daddy master-minded since I was
  inside the crib
 under a tennis-ball mobile
  that revolved his egos and dreams.
Then I felt
blood gushing on the merciless court
as I chase down my opponent’s heated offense
until it was over.

Against the blaring yellow sunlight
I turn milk chocolate bittersweet
down my throat
and count
the moments towards repentance.

My hand raises across the net to congratulate the Player.
The high sun still sits on the afterthought of that vacant sky
wondering if Dad would be proud.

Walking away from the court
I see now with cold sweat to hide me
my chance was never there.

**Wii Ruled the Court**  (2nd Poem)

Up and down I control the fire-baked courts and that’s how I’d smitten the sport.
Left and right my opponents run against my ball under the twisting sun.
Glistening down the long corridor of my determined jaw, could *self* remain true to its due course?
Fine, but not fine, my skort-pleats creased unendingly still as hell.

I beat down unfinished childhood nights counting target cones I’d struck for a buck.
By second grade I’d count one or two more, and not by coaxing luck.
And when I didn’t get more, the broken truth is, it absolutely stuck.
To get through, I’d count the pocket money I would’ve made if I hadn’t sucked.

They tell me the wrist injury can’t be undone, and rehab can’t give me a refund.
Retasked for a second run: a new flame inhales the court, grows despite the vulnerable shorts—
Crush and set an example, in flurry seconds watch the rival scramble.
Aah, the things I imagine, daring when the virtual animation bows to old passion.

One more time to back the name or walk away from this cyber game.
Amidst the kept thralls of shelter-in-place, scowl social-distance with grace.
Convicted a player of racquet sports, approach the pastime that judges a thousand sorts.
I stand true holding the *Wii*-mote in cutting, pleated skorts.
SCHWAY, PASTEL

Pastel Schway
Age: 16, Grade: 11
Home School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Janet Tseng
Category: Poetry

Summers with Granny by the Shore

Millions of bubbles with frothy foam streamline the dimly lit shore
Mesmerizing even as I had seen it thousands of times before

With constant and perfect rhythm, a lullaby so sweet
The waves never once pause as the water parts and meets.

Clear ripples lap at my ankles, swallowing bare heels then carefully withdraw
In the shore-light a tiny ghost crab gracefully escapes a swooping bird’s jaw.

The crab scuttles through the wet shoreline, leaving prints
Of soft, riddled secrets in the sand whispering hints.

Water spurs upward, mark, then sprawls towards me.
The edge of my dress dampens as I walk further into sea.

Rough granules of sand prick between the crevices of my toes.
Salt bits cling to my skin as the water plays its vagrant ode.

I walk in the dark to the time you held my tiny hand, leading me by the ocean calm.
The reflection on the water is soft and soothing like an angel’s quiet, open palm.

When you called and said you’d be here like before
The reds of my swollen shoes just brood, waiting, on the beach shore.

My heavy lids close the monologue with the pale midnight air
If only I could make it back earlier to this secret lair.

My hand drops into the sea, fingering the cool water’s qualm
I still my movements, sigh, and watch the glittering calm.

Upon the waves, the stars tumble and topple, riding the points of the full zodiac
As the wind blows the water forward and back, my reflection keeps getting further off track.

Then the meek stars all kneel upon the flickering waters
Like receding tide carrying each born moment to its slaughter.

I stare back at the stained-glass water projecting the moon-glow
And give a full kiss to the sky above and the deeps below.

To each piece of colored shimmering glass, a memory of the past I see
I think to myself even though I’ve come so far, will the night let you see me?
Steadily the sun begins to rise and I
Lament it’s time to bid another goodbye.

The headlights of my Uber approaching, I turn and gaze into the sand one last time
And steal a burrowing sand dollar from the shore, clenching a moment that’s yours and mine.

Then as the car pulls away, a pair of red heels is left cradled deeply in the sand
I’m ready to brace the hospital again as the sand dollar molds itself into my hand.
Once Upon a COVID

On Trend  (Poem No.1)

Where I am
down the other
to part the cantering cubicle curtains,
so to converge the glare of the waiting area,
hesitating,
as mosaics of bodies shuddering,
  together framing runs on the cardiac monitors ahead—
  analog lines push in the same direction
  some variable
  others falling out.
Ventilator lights flicker in the gray gorge of patients’ eyes
their hands folding my voice
begging to answer their sad smile:
  the odds of losing to white silence,
  shall I turn a white lie?
Rhetorical questions stare me to decide
as they’re hushed onto stretchers
carrying full ID bands spiraling their dicey wrists.
The honesty each day deceives
believing in the intubation once more
dripping sweat to stall and back tick
barely mortality’s call.
Yet I only see a plain round clock splitting the wall
blaring its succession of Code Reds
near the nurse’s call station.
As a young mother’s being separated from her aging mom,
the aging mom’s separating her being
near the nurse’s call station
seceding her Code Reds out of the split clock
rounding the plain
to see only mortality’s call barely tick back
to stall sweat dripping more
once the intubation had believed
to deceive her day of honesty.
Already dicey, she’s spiraled into a hushed stretcher,
her bony wrist fully lives in the ID band carrying her
that’s deciding to stare me white.
I turn to silence the odds
lost in her sad smile.
Answering her folded hands,
my voice not knowing how
it will flicker in her gray gorge
when the ventilator lights fall out.
We see each other’s variable direction,
analog lines on the run,
push ahead the monitors,
together framing bodies shuttered onto mosaics
hesitating
under the glare of the waiting area
converging the cubicle curtains
cantering my other part down to
where I am.

**Hope is OK Again**  (Poem No. 2)

1.
i land.
i walk out of the plane from the gate. the air is recycled.
i don’t smell cinnamon buns or supersized french fries.
i don’t see people bobbing up and down
escalators brimming with laughter of travel.
there would be no easy way out
of overhead banners, large LCD screens, dioramas, and wall wraps
promising the blue sail, the warm wind, the smell i ache.
high resolution ocean fronts washing surf music
escort domestic and international passengers along
the light hula dance steps, circling plumeria crowns and leis
so photo-shopped whites and violets could run off their digital billboards
to climb the sweet “Aloha” across love, friendship, and honor—
the little things kindergarten taught me to get an A
as I follow neon arrows of yesterday’s call
to sign up and get matched.
one-stop to hospitals. in just 24-hours. connect to free hotel rooms.
report to where? the pandemic response team, “on behalf of new yorkers, we are
incredibly grateful…” their voices over and into the AC
blowing fast across my blood, the plastic wrapped tunnels singing
their way up my veins, out of the long main terminal
and don’t turn back. Instead, my cell rings.

"hi. on my way to baggage claim now. i’ll call you when i get to the hotel room."
every moment feeds my obligation coiling my gut like a parasitic worm
centered around a hopeful nursery back home.
i’m not supposed to be here. but they told me they really needed the extra hand.
and i took the oath at graduation.
so i flee into the waiting arms
of my uber driver.

the driver doesn't look at me. i am grateful.
everyone who looks only sees the white coat.
most stay silent - "respectful" - but others?
the worst stare me in the eye with pity,
like they could read my life story
in the coarse abbreviation after my name
fraying on the nursing breast pocket.
their mouths can twist and contort
and say whatever they want,
but their eyes tell all.
2.
five months successfully recruited
and served, then converted the test positive
and was sent back home.

i wait out
in my bedroom
across the nursery
yet i hear
the hissing of ventilators
beepings from cardiac monitors
up and down zigzags across the screens
like tall white stilettos tapping against a dirty bar floor.
i remember an endless heft through the blue
masks and powderless gloves fluttering patients
rolling a trail that finally meets
souls slumped on stretchers.

there i judged time being bulldozed
by the ticking seconds between each crash code.
i remember their eyes asking in a million ways
and fading into ash and smoke in one.
i remember faceless zipped bodies
stacked inside U-Haul trucks next to the hospital
abandoned in the march and traffic of the city
to be lost in some pale cement ditch
sharing obscurity with thousands of mixed-in bones.

i have collected ghosts
like a child would collect baseball cards or barbie dolls.
they simmer in the shadows, frozen in their square inch of hell.
i sleep with the lights on so when i wake up in the middle of the night
i can't see their sitting posture next to me.

still now i'm trying to make sense
of the plumeria lei hanging behind
the door to the nursery room,
overpowering in its sweet baby-powder scent,
that’s leaning an A into the light
for effort. so maybe. eventually.
not tomorrow or today;
but perhaps eventually
i can learn to be okay
as i'm told to pick up
the crying baby.

**In You**  
(Poem No. 3)

The sunset that faded between your shoulders
Glowed of the ashes’ love for whiskey’s fire
To leave strong and long the second half
Poured into tall glass lovers that feasted the windy fire
Against the bough where you joined branches with choir.

Your steady hand that never did plan
The scalpels and pliers parting down time
When cirrhotic tissues still held cells to sanctuary and desire
And suture edges backed the coming
Of a stretched smile drunken with mystery bent in your bottle.

By the time you stopped and filled the premonition
You learned the fundamentals of surgery
Gambled sober sterilization on an open skillet
Listened to the AA ceremonial bits cool
And started the funeral standing to its own fire.
The Fabric of Dreams

Windowside Dreamer  (Poem No. 1)

1. The dreams toss and turn the clouds around the half tucked-in moon
   slanted from the bedroom window past the brushings of a tree.
   The other half content beneath the shadow of clouds, stealthily whispers a name.
   To this unmasked Dreamer, sitting out the wicker maker with social distancing
   whose unbound rattan folds arms, crosses legs, burrows head
   into the dark raw weave of cold colorless walls
   glistening Its fibers, shifting uneasily, requesting a different ending
   to Its story before the chair emptied and the window lifted.
   What if Dreamer dives from the six-foot dangling belt
   ending the hunt at the chair’s dividing edge?
   Kneeling on the bare wooden floor,
   feel the moon’s twilight pull living tributaries from Its limbs,
   push the emerald swelling out Its throat, making
   fools of parents, betrayals on friends, lies to brethren
   just to cling onto a simple life overlooked by isolation’s watch.
   So moments loop tirelessly to give null a reason to chase the skies
   and the two lost hands desperately tick the arc,
   half-inclined, finally turn to reach the open emptiness of a plunge
   into not the plumpness of the bedroom,
   but the dark vast horizon It no longer fears
   to fling with under the cool night stars.

2. A mother’s back could break ten thousand times over
   bending and melding a decade-and-a-half of beaming smiles from photos
   spanning kindergarten to high school of child and mother
   holding their togetherness under the unbreakable glass front
   to strand precious moments into permanence
   from flattened scraps of candid portraits
   pivoting
     around
     inside
     a wooden
     frame
   colorless, the mother was pressing hard to her bosom
   trapping it narrowly in her arms’ shore.
   She was seen proud.
   Then she remembered how the dreamer followed another dream
   breaching the lockdown
   containing thousands of bruises clinging on dropped leaves
   that the standing oak tree greed
   into the youngster’s bedroom window.
3. Before the service
another belt was found, hung to the split oak tree
mingling to the drift of the random wind
reaching where the dreamer’s dream could no longer climb.
Could Dreamer now dream a happier commerce
between sky-blue ports and huge violaceous masts
even with no loose wind to guide?
Today It is laid,
   cheeks up
   palms down
   heels straight
And slowly the dreamer’s
crossing
begins
toward the elusive bluff
as the grand tree is swiftly cut standing Its mangled attempts,
there the body cleaves the Dreamer free to steerIts mount.

4. That year trudged and one would just about abandon wondering,
   if it would ever be enough to spend days nearly forgetting
   that the child is a star plucked from out of the sky.
When a mother breaks stones, reaching the clouds’ armor for a drop of warmth
and rearranges Its socks in neat rows with the top edges gently folded down
and the sweaters stacked by color next to a dozen fresh lavender sachets
inside a retired dresser opposite the youngster’s bed
clearing exactly where a wicker had wanted to go
and make beautiful weavings worthy of Its room,
she allows her heart to recreate a nest
by the bedroom window up again,
   where she says,“You are loved” to the upward turn
of the emerging side branches dressed in golden sunlight
guarding over the uncomposed standing simmeriness
of a new, breathless
young oak tree.

Sonnet to the Carousel  (Poem No. 2)

In a two dollar trot-and-prance whirl ride,
Near a minute of fearless spinning thrill,
Twenty vibrant horses on every side
My sister and I mount fire for the kill.

Under the cresting boards and twinkling lights
I feel the vigor of my flowing steed
Quicker and quicker in our satellites
Laughter turns calvary to panting speed.

Mother’s photo once filled with bright colors
Of thundering horses drawn by brass poles
Now aged, bleached, cracked from timeless soft summers
Still holds a joyous yearning in our souls.

Sister and I just look at each other
Halves to bear the camera’s long splendor.
Yet it’s over. Once I huddled masses,  
the lost, the tired, the poor, the trespasses,  
among them songbirds on this teeming shore  
so they could keep dreaming and fear no more.  
Kelps tracing our future tossed to extreme  
till tempest hung black coldness in between.

Greenhouse regimes smothered the light once sought  
inner planet’s frenzy intellect brought,  
sophistication not been written past  
my omen to refuge the very last.  
Left to climb this buckling, climatic hour,  
who’d know? Strip hope down my crown-lit tower.

“To end in fire or ice” retold so plain  
why wild hurricanes robbed my torch its reign.  
Caught the world’s missteps tremble underfoot,  
my sigh heaved loose the patina and soot.  
I stood spat on by man’s frivolous touch  
yet, loved humanity ever so much.

Trouble meld themselves over weary shores,  
storm surges, beating tides, erosions’ sores—  
white sands dearly lost framing coastal fronts,  
no longer know the joys of beaches once.  
Waves never seen before sprang transverse rounds  
where shackle and chain on my feet are found.

I pose pinched by drapery of choices  
on pedestal cases wiped of voices.  
Industrialization from before  
tipped end scores till mortals rivalled no more.  
Add length to what made men dream long ago,  
nowhere to hide me from where men don’t know.

Say I may still stand my stairwell’s remains,  
fend off fire-veering wind and acid rain,  
knowing he who made me with hand and tool  
and he who destroyed the tight climate rule,  
if to crave and to spite are for the same  
man’s wedge in changing his ways was to blame.

Perhaps this negligent death is too cruel  
unspecified time declares me a fool.  
My fathers deposited to core’s dust  
and my chains and shackles crossed over rust.  
Down my feet the matron’s story is done—  
and return to ore from whence I begun.

the Rose Peace Reclaimed  
(Poem No. 4)

Behind a fine morning in 1935  
Below the sun’s bolden high
A special seedling just cultivated
Between two rose hybrids unrelated

From a quaint southern French garden
Dared a new seedling to stardom
With its petals cream and pink on the margins,
Thick glossy green leaves like wax freshly hardened.

Francis who took over the family’s rose nursery
With specimen in hand, bowed to its scrolling glory
Quickly named it after his beloved mother you see
Replacing its lab name No. 3-thirty five-forty.

The rose forsook the border’s holding boundary
Her beauty’s insolence snared far, to exile beyond
The arrogance of Joy in Italy, Glory of God in Germany
Everywhere scurrying behind its crests of unapologetic dawn.

It’s ladled stem dipped above WWII’s fray on nations
She attracted the foreheads of bitten conversations.
Came along before the German invasion,
Francis smuggled cuttings to an unsigned American destination.

The rose seedlings took the last civilian aircraft
Departing France under the military draft.
Pray, pray, Francis used all his craft
Leastwise not to be sunken with any passenger raft.

To propagate in the loam soil by Pennsylvania’s bended knee
In the miles of burnt incense of war climbing west and east
Where the fallen sun around the rocks softly proclaimed it Peace
Over sipped tea and sugar as the wind moved the two doves upon release.

Well say I, like Michelangelo’s giant legend
You gave us velours only his palette could have imagined
Left tales of The World’s Favorite Rose in your petals of flare of uneven seconds
Scented the Rose Hall of Fame in glass bowls with drowning candles to be reckoned.

Of all the centerpiece and street roses
This one the warm sun still casts its millionth ferocious pose,
The one sweeping the sound of waking leaves to my toes,
And still goes on, cloven to give and to keep what it began long ago.
A Little Obsessed

Meet You at the Island  (Poem No. 1)

Above, foggy morning brawl between the winds and the clouds silences the trembling shore lights.

Clearing the dock, along my left on the wooden hull brown wading birds blare impatiently past my reflection, dissolving on the ferry’s bow, the water departs its score.

Listlessly the retiring day catches the scent of “sympathy” creamy white calla lilies whirling from the deck seat, turning from another time, riven by a seagull’s call.

Your emboldening farewell request to lay amongst the stricken beyond the end, above battering highs and dodging lows.

Ahead, an outline of the island’s wharf nearing and a slowing shiphorn blows the green hollow reeds

freely amidst crumbling bedrocks in water-tufted scrap and debris bearing the tide in swells and leaps

carrying my ride to a clenched past gathered and scattered by pandemia whose frock blighted your whisper…

What can only be a moment when the sky deepens where my heart can freely go

to a shade of nearly letting go must now shake it back down, deep into the throat of a wild island lily—

The pure scent of standing tall and free knowing peace leaving the curve emerges from the nobility of you and many.
This journey I’ll find in no book
what I’ll discover when I reach your resting ground
there furrowed with other lightly-settled bodies.

Where back in my dreams, you would’ve been saved.
Instead, daybreak still finds its way to call you back
and all that remains is a stretched mass grave.

GRAY PUSS  (Poem No. 2)

The sun dozed and filled the afternoon with its golden heart
abruptly, a human hand with rose shears started doing its art.
Snipped and chipped till a barren randomness imparts
on a bush at the rear fence where peeling planks are falling apart.
I of high leaps and superior snout could forgive and outsmart
the intolerable form of my human counterpart,
and startle the one doing its savage craft a start.
Beneath the still world of flowers tall and tart
four nimble limbs shot past the ill-shapen bush like fire to darts
and from my cozy hearth under warm swerving branches, I depart.

Flee from this landscaping Scrooge was my only thought
the hot-headed dog, the headless eagle, and all sapiens brought
trouble and terror that’s ever fought.
Scampering atop the old wooden fence, my paw was suddenly caught
between two side planks with an adjoining wire knot.
My front paw could not knock off the pain pinned on that spot.
But something amongst the leaves the human gave or sought
lifted and pushed the planks seemingly apart to help, but not.
Not even past the crippled webs and smelly rot,
bulge not the planks too deeply set in sullen wrought.

The tug of planks prying open then naught
the real weak human hand failing to hold the rebound taut
the recoil of the innate plank that’s left my paw simply distraught
in that moment ripped the garden like loud mousetraps cutting across.
The rule for a desperate kitty is to keep whiskers at all cost—
and not to indulge in man’s wild onslaught,
nor to become the next bound mascot,
neither too feeble to be anguishly fraught.
Yet know that the ninth-life’s still not lost,
quick, I bite the human hand that halfway tenders across.

Before the plank’s second snap back to self, untaught,
I leapt against hard bewildered thought
to fate the famous English chap’s third law of cracked flowerpots
of every action there’s an equal and opposite reaction by Nerf shots.
So to fight Scourge really was my last thought
after all, wasn’t I the one who was caught?
But Moses the Tabby “to let the humans go” brought heart to fraught.
Though how fast to watch the greed of the day drowning out
a god who holds all crippling biped creatures back to what’s ought,
were the raptures of kindness enough by this humanity’s pruning lot?
The Midnight Hour (Poem No. 3)

The moon slants long shadows on the high-tide line
Nearby dune grasses sway to the warm salty breeze
Among gravel and debris, the soft white sand opens its shrine
133 baby Loggerhead turtles scratching to the sea.

Look for the distant bright light of the horizon, our new home
Watch for the claws of the scavenging raccoons with no mercy
Behold the crushing jaws of snakes and lizards feigning stone
103 baby Loggerhead turtles staggering to the sea.

 Barely the size of two bottle caps
 Less than the weight of fifty peas
 Each carrying within their hearts navigation maps
 83 baby Loggerhead turtles striving to the sea.

 Some too tired, some confused where to go
 Man’s artificial lights that scatter all they see
 Disoriented little flippers move to and fro
 63 baby Loggerhead turtles struggling to the sea.

 Behind, a hatchling brother is dragged by a ghost crab down a hole
 Above, a hatchling sister is snatched up by a gull on a circling spree
 Below, will my fate be met by a moray eel in the deep ocean bowl?
 43 baby Loggerhead turtles scuffling to the sea.

 The coastline surf pulls us into water then back to land
 Again water, then tugging us back just so slightly.
 We made it on the third try with waves lapping over wet sand
 23 baby Loggerhead turtles slipping into the sea.

 Charging through the waves’ riding crests,
 Peaks and troughs till we are where we need to be
 Skimming onto mats of algae for a hard fought rest
 3 baby Loggerhead turtles sailing triumphantly in the sea.

All Hail, a Sonnet (Poem No. 4)

When flesh flies hum sweetness over Arras
Against the turned setting sun, watch me pass.
Measured by propeller’s half spinning brass,
The hour eases, feeds shadows long and crass.

Could still hear the dogfight, detour, the dash
Of flocked bullets hissing in mangled flash.
Petrol tank pillaged by staccato’s gash,
My cockpit gun starved beyond ammo’s stash.

Clots cling to my marrow’s inertial mass
Burning gas weds tears to the scent of grass.
When my brethren and I are laid to rest
Under shroud of soot and snow, unconfessed
Our banner will fasten the city sky,
Excavate great hollows behind my eyes.
Hailey Shin  
Age: 16, Grade: 11  
School Name: Meadows School, Las Vegas, NV  
Educator: Jenny Tolen  
Category: Poetry

The Old and The New

Old wounds, old wanderings, one by one  
Bear weight on my heart.  
People with ruthless, dangerous, thoughtless words  
Back when I mistrusted everything.  
We seem to remember people who seem error-prone.  
But now the flowers that used to bloom will be lovely again.

You tell me about your life, you answer my questions to life.  
Beings are creating our own order.  
We must be willing to accept change.  
Back on our feet again.  
This is the world we live in together.  
Bring in the world we want to live in.

The flowers are blooming again.  
All the wounds that made us sick and shudder fade.  
One the road to positivity at last.  
We must change for us.  
We must live with the world we are stuck with.  
After all, there is no "back" in forward.
Ice Cream

I've never liked ice cream when I younger
I never understood why people would cry while eating ice cream
But high school came.
And now, I understand.

Oh ice cream,
Sweet, creamy texture
Frozen hard, icy, crunchy, soft, or completely melted
With so many different flavors and combinations
Oh ice cream.

Froyo, gelato, sorbet, or mochi
Crazy flavors like cilantro or bacon
(Bacon is actually pretty good)
I can never get tired of you
Just please do not be goat cheese ice cream again.

Oh ice cream
You're always there
From school drama, COVID, riots, to test stress
I might have had a hard time finding you during COVID
But even then, you were there for me.

So this might be silly,
Writing to ice cream.
But I really appreciate ice cream.
I thank you ice cream, for being with me.
I love you ice cream.
Anisha Silva
Age: 17, Grade: 12
School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Christi Thomas-McEachern
Category: Poetry

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**Twister**

It twists and turns and swirls and whirls, we run away as our world burns
The uncertainty is present with the sun and the moon's crescent
Day and night, health and hurt the everlasting every present
Disease burns from in to the out, the out to the in
They die and we cry, try and pry away at the layers
Of the sick. Of the hurt. Of those we can not serve
It twists and spins Relentless with it’s victim
No cure in sight we are blind
We are dying and still we are
Trying, Tiring and crying
We buy time to lose time
Time is running out
Our time is dying
As we are dying
To rid the
Disease
Before
The
Disease
Rids
Us

The use of binary opposition, rhyme, repetition and structure in this Twister poem, helps to convey the idea of chaos and constant uncertainty in a time of an unforgiving disease; the relationship between words and ideas gives the speaker emotions to help the reader understand the severity of the world at this time.
Anisha Silva  
Age: 17, Grade: 12  
School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV  
Educator: Christi Thomas-McEachern  
Category: Poetry

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**Flowing River Poem**

Breathe in breathe out as the chaos surrounds  
To release, reduce the chaos that is around  
We take pills to calm  
Therapist talks, therapist walks,  
Depression and regression  
Our chills that are about.  
Calming the chaos, taming the mind  
Framing the the type, making it mine  
Drink hot tea, smoke warm leaves  
Trying to breathe  
We plead. Gasping for air trying to see  
The end of the agony, feel the release  
The calm we need, the calm we dream  
Unimaginable, unpredictable  
Unruffled waters we try  
To be, but still we  
Are unable to see  
The calm of the  
Storm in the disease

The use of rhyme and repetition in the “Flowing River Poem” portray the earnest need for some semblance of calm and peace within a chaotic world, the narrator describes the methods that try to relieve themselves of the uncertainty of the world but is yet to be granted the relief needed.
Eva Silvestri
Age: 18, Grade: 12

School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Caprice Houston-Bey

Category: Poetry

Hamlet Character Poem

An Enigma of Emotions

He is an enigma 1
The pieces of the puzzle not quite fitting, 2
Has he gone mad or is this grief? 3
The question to which we are getting 4

He is lonely but well-liked, depressed but dynamic 5
His view on the situation was not so panoramic 6

But with this we must hold back our blame, 7
For if the crown killed our parents, would we not act the same? 8

Many would say he is as mad as a hatter 9
Seemingly having lost all his sense 10
But following through with revenge seemed to be an issue 11
Could he possibly be on the fence? 12
Alive or dead, to be or not to be 13
Hamlet longed to live in a dreamless sleep 14
A sleep that would bring peace to his sadness 15
A sleep with no worries and no stress 16

Yorick's skull, what do you mean? 17
The inevitable fact of man eventually returning to dust. 18
Will this fate soon shake Hamlet's hand? 19
With the disorder he has caused, at one point it must. 20

We witness his grief lead him more to uncertainty 21
Than to insanity, but this does not last forever. 22
The rumble of Fortinbras' approaching army sparks a change 23
On his mission of revenge he will now endeavor. 24

The sanity and certainty was restored within his mind 25
But the fate of Denmark was already signed. 26
Gertrude drank from the cup, Claudius was impaled by his own schemes 27
And just as he wished earlier, Hamlet entered a sleep with no dreams. 28
Jenell Slesser
Age: 17, Grade: 12

School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Christi Thomas-McEachern

Category: Poetry

Raindrops Lead to Rainbows

One
by one
is how it
all starts, then
another and another.
Soon everything is falling
down without a sign of it ever
going to stop. Life is like a rainstorm.
It can happen out of the blue, or erupt after
many failed attempts. Now everything is dark
and gloomy with sunlight nowhere to be found.
It seems like everything we know is lost and we
have no idea where we are or where we will be
going. Like all storms, this too will pass even
though it leaves behind damages. If we are
able to push through any storm, and
overcome our struggles and
challenges, we can get
through anything
in our lives

After a rainstorm
there is always a rainbow,
although we may not always see it.
It might be hidden behind a cloud, or so
faint we can barely see the bright colors shining
from the sun, but that does not mean it is not there.
After a long and difficult journey through the rainstorm,
we are rewarded with an exciting path towards the rainbow.
Everything around us is bright and cheerful. We can see clearly
ahead and know that whatever is going to happen, we will be okay.
The colors of the rainbow
can be connected with
many different emotions
we have felt throughout
our journey. Red relates to
the anger we had while
orange represents the joy
when we first began.
Yellow stands for the good
and happy times
with green representing
achieved. Blue is for the
the growth we have
times and purple is finally
sad and struggling
beginning. This new path is
the start to a new
to take and can not wait
one we are excited
for the journey ahead.
Paige Sondgeroth
Age: 17, Grade: 12
School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Christi Thomas-McEachern
Category: Poetry

The Star

“The Star”

The star
atop the
tall and full tree
shines bright in the
dark and dull night. The
snow falls outside as children run inside
to escape the cold. The day of fun and play ended as the parents say it
is time for bed. The bright star paves the way to another great day
of hope and happiness. These moments are bliss, few and far
between. The day of joy is drawing near as the wise
men followed the star to the place where the
Savior was born. There is no need to fear
the birth of Christ is drawing near.
He will save us from our sins and
lead us to eternal hope, happiness, and peace. I saw
a shooting star tonight and wished for happiness, hope, and light. The coming of the Savior is drawing near let us let go of sadness
and fear and open up to one another’s
Christmas cheer.
It's the trees

It's the trees

The pane keeps us apart, and the side opposite of my planted fear reveals rooted resentment. Palms pressed into my ears and knees tucked in, I cannot push myself farther between the wall's meet. I cannot muffle the force of the strike. Stricken skin or branches colliding. It's the trees. I can't ignore the voices that bellow echoes. Papa's screams or windy leaves joyriding. It's the trees. It aches to keep my eyelids so clenched, allowing the comfort of the lie to hold onto my small fingers. Listening, hoping, praying it were different. Tear-stained, drenched. The pain keeps us apart. It's the trees.
Papa's truck

Papa's truck
He was the hero I couldn't get to. Warm
eyes complimented by a cold expression.
Eyes ahead and fingers wrapped
around the wheel, his fingers tapped.
So my fingers tapped. He was particular. Synchronization techno
and metal guitar rock, nothing other than the neon era. He held on
to the parts of him he could bear, the parts he was proud of. It was his
distinctive trait. Now also my distinctive trait. Each ride in his white
tuck with the red stripe, a new part of him open for grabs.
Ready to meet me. Ready to share with me. Each day and each ride,
a new tapping tune and a new piece of his personality.
A new warm expression
to match eyes. Taps into lyrics,
lyrics into stories

Freddie, Elton,
Bowie, continuous.
The men who intro-
duced me to the man
whose soul didn't
exist, no longer

no.

body.
If a Tree Falls in a Forest

fly
How curious that we smack down the fly without even asking what he's up to perhaps it would be better if we could feel something beyond guilt or sorrow, I think it would help if there was blood on our hands I suppose it's up to interpretation in the figurative sense but I think the literal is what we often need Guts and gore and blood are a nice reminder of murder that we don’t get with the fun-sized fly For a second I feel very heavy at the thought that perhaps the fly I have just killed was really just looking for his last place to lay down and he trusted me, or at the very least did not fear me enough, so he laid down on my computer keyboard to say goodbye forever in a dignified manner and I squashed him like a… well… bug Or is the better word human? and then I rubbed his carcass into a million pieces sprayed some hand sanitizer and wiped my hands off And now I’m typing this on the very keyboard where he died I smacked down the fly without even asking what he was up to, and now I’m going to pretend that somehow I’m different

If a Tree Falls in a Forest

Wednesday night after the rain The roads soaked like sponges I could imagine them puffing up The way Jenny from the library said her eyes did when she cried

Driving home sky Colored sherbert a little melted, mixed, held behind fog The sort of sight that words were too much for Rain brought out the ugly metaphors The bad poems The leaves from the trees and the soil from the sidewalk The quiet of

Wednesday night

He said “Maybe the two of you are just growing apart” But thinking back now, I don’t know about that Maybe it's as simple as this: they grew up, while i grew down no one ever tells you what to do
when the death of a friendship is
Less of an execution
And more of slow internal bleeding
It is like draining the water from the bathtub

**The Birds and the Bourgeoisie**

At seven years old,
in my PE class,
Us first graders had to practice relay races to learn teamwork.
In these races,
There’s a baton.
It looks like a hotdog.
It does not taste like a hotdog, we found that out quickly
This baton, in all of its plastic, stick-like glory,
was very important
the symbolistic backbone of relay racing, if you will
The teachers said to hold tight to the baton,
then run until the whistle blew.
This would be a piece of cake.
They say run,
I say how high.
On my turn,
I ran and ran and ran and the whistle blew.
And, although I didn’t understand why I had to stop,
I did
and then the baton was handed off to the next patriot, and the cycle continued.
Later, it occurred to me;
why run the whole race, when you can run ¼ of it
and call it teamwork?

Eight years later,
copying the answers to the chemistry homework on the gym floor,
I was running the relay race again.
(Teamwork is really just a codeword for cheating).
(Secrets are best said in parentheses).

**The Matriarch**

My hair is wet, dripping down my back in a way that makes my shirt stick uncomfortably
I’ve got to be going, I’ve got a thing in twenty minutes
Dad is here on time like he said he would be
but my hair is all tangled from swimming and I can’t get a brush through it to save my life
I’m standing by the kitchen island, holding a comb, telling my dad that we’re going to be late because well,
my hair
when my grandma takes the comb and comes to stand behind me
She says that it’s easier if you start at the bottom and brush your way up
She does just that
almost rhythmically so
and I’m reminded that my grandma is a genie with hair because
there was a time when she did this for a living
I imagine other girls standing where I stand
grabbing the countertop for support
letting my grandma work
nevermind that my grandparents moved here, to this house, well into retirement
Sometimes I just forget that my grandma is a person
a whole person
who hasn’t just lived here her whole life taking care of children and grandchildren and a husband
It feels impossible to imagine her young in the way that I am
I don’t even have words for it
The way I stripped my grandma of her existence as an individual
It’s easier to imagine her as a background character in a show
where the past is only implemented in flashbacks that are necessary to the plot, my plot,
because it’s easier
to pretend that her life started the moment I was born
Sure, the sun is setting on my childhood, but I can’t put it to bed just yet
Tastes of salt by the beach
Goosebumps outside the store that sold marbles
A wedding
A funeral
Moments where I thought that if I blinked hard enough my brain would take a picture
It didn’t

And yet she has always been my grandma,
quick to comb my hair and bake me cookies and make me quilts
attending every school awards ceremony even if the seats hurt her back
And I licked her heart clean like the bone of a chicken wing
It seems odd that for all she has given me, it will be all she leaves me.
A reminder to brush my hair from the bottom up and several lifetimes worth of love.

**Asking For a Friend, When Do We Get Out of Here?**

I wonder right now if your eyes are open or closed,
but even though I could easily know by looking at your face,
which lies right next to mine,
I don’t look,
because I’m pretty sure that that would break the rules
(albeit the unstated rules)
of these conversations,
the silent understanding that the secrets we choose to divulge should be handled with the care of a Catholic
confessional.

She was laying in my bed for the hundredth millionth time and I was still not quite used to it.
I could only ever do this sort of thing with her,
and even then,
only when the lights were off
It was already too much to think about if I was laying too close or too far or breathing too loud or-
“Do you think he really loves me?”
She layed careening on her side, hunched so her face was mere centimeters from mine.
I turned to lie on my back.
“Maybe.”
I didn’t think he loved her, but it didn’t seem like the time to tell her.
“Are you sure?”
I weighed this question in my hand like a coin,
trying to guess whether heads or tails was the right answer
These types of conversations were something I stored in my pocket to mull over later
Every time nighttime rolled around
and we found ourselves on the edge of consciousness,
I wondered if we were really just making another excuse to bare our souls with each other.
her breaths spoke their own sort of language, one whispered quietly in space but roared in proximity, a tongue that I
could translate if I could only listen.
“I mean, it isn’t really me who needs to be sure, you know?”
“Yeah, yeah, I was just thinking, like, I kind of want to break up with him.”
She waited.
“Oh.”
Long pause
“Do you think that’s really really dumb of me?”
“No, it’s just, I thought you liked him.”
“I don’t know, I thought I did, but now I think I liked the idea of having someone more than I liked him.”
I told her I get what she means
Because I did
And we talk
To be honest, reader, I don’t want to tell you much about it
Because it feels like opening up the underwear drawer that is my heart
But I loved her for a lot of reasons, and I wish you could have heard her speak
So you would understand at least one of them

She cracks her neck
Her fingers
Ankles elbows
Nudges her foot up against mine
Interlocks our toes
Turns the lamp off and goes to bed
she broke up with him about a week or so later,
and I didn’t think about that conversation for a while.
It didn’t come back to me until
I began to like the idea of having someone more than I should’ve, too

I know we are not friends anymore because the other day I caught myself wondering
“Would I even feel it if you died?”
I never realized how nice it was
to have someone who knew the story because they had lived it with you
From now on,
Everyone who knows me will only know the me that I choose to tell.
It did not occur to me
that I would not want to be a storyteller in all aspects of my life.
And I know, I know, it’s not the end of the world
My brother says even sex gets old after some time
But
If someone were to slip into my bed in the dead of night and brush their toes up against mine in that way she did
I think I would combust right then and there on the spot
And the dust and the ashes
From the explosion of my body
Would float up and mingle with the stars
Brushing each other in that way of ours
Holding hands
Like we held feet
Taylor Telles  
Age: 18, Grade: 12  
School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV  
Educator: Caprice Houston-Bey  
Category: Poetry

Gertrude's Lament

My son, I write this now to you  
Although you know, I’ve not been true.  
Finally I see what I have done  
Despite my plans, no one has won.  
Confusion, delusion, I’ve fallen victim  
I’ve rejected every wise dictum.  
You are like a flower in the road.  
I am the witch, you are the toad.  
The guilt of casting my spell on you  
Has eaten me like maggots through and through.  
Your constant croak which I ignored  
Drowned out by corpses on the floor.  
It’s too late now, you’ve sealed your fate.  
I’ll see you at a later date.  
For now, you’ll soon lay six feet under  
Finally resting with your father.
Matthew Thomas
Age: 17, Grade: 12

School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Caprice Houston-Bey

Category: Poetry

New King

O how I need thee, come grant my dream
To win the queens hand, to fulfill my scheme
A widow I made, mine if she does abide
The death of one king, rewards the other with his bride.

My heart beating like a drum
My new son was a tornado of emotions
Crying constantly over the crown
Complaining that my lust last for his mother

Deafening silence filled the air
Why has my new son made a mockery of me
My face became as white as snow
I need to leave right away

Power is an uncontrollable lust
Its shiny radiance calls my name
The prize of the golden crown is a must
It symbolizes the winner of the game

Family against friend, for the state of us all
Swoosh of the blade (onomatopoeia)
The steel blade danced a crossed his face
Swoosh of the blade

Gulping down defeat from the black chalice
Knowing that I will pass
Was it really worth it
Only one can answer that
Hamlet, How?

Hamlet, how?
Oh Hamlet, how oh how could this happen
Oh Hamlet, you were everyone’s companion
You made hasty choices avoiding how others were hurt
You alert other of the emotions you assert
The poor souls you’ve scratched have suffered miserable deaths,
Only for them to be horrendous mistakes.
It’s fair to call you death’s everlasting breath
As you bring demise to all you meet! for Heaven’s sake!
As the dynamite blows through the mines
It opens way in search of hidden treasure
That of which certainly shines
Those who find it assume it brings them pleasure
Hamlet, you’re the dynamite that whines
Wow! How could he?
You’ve put yourself in a bittersweet position
Resenting Claudius’ actions like a judiciary
You’ve successfully become who you sought to destroy
No doubt, you’re the ugly duckling of the family
Opposing shape poems

The Mighty Sun

A large sphere,
A fireball towering above us.
Nourishing us with powerful UV rays,
A power source for thousands of creatures.
Generating warmth plus light for all to survive.
Routinely ascending and descending from the sky.
Saving us from the cold and darkness in it’s absence,
A fireball millions of miles away, its effects widespread.
Making the coldest of days full of warmth, life, and light.
Allowing for photosynthesis to happen within many plants,
Yet in excess causing damages, from burns to skin cancer.
The joyous basking can turn to extremely painful burning,
From millions of miles away it still causes some suffering.
But it should not be feared, as it’s an essential resource,
Warming the planet for all, allowing for life to survive.
Creating routine and structure for all of earth’s life,
Most importantly, allowing for us to tell the time.
Shining down a path for all of us to follow,
Essential for all life, nourishing us all.
The light that is here to stay,
The mighty sun.

The ominous moon

Lurking in the sun’s shadows
Hidden behind the sun’s light
Illuminating the dark night sky
Darting through the starry sky
Casting shadows on the waters
A alternating color every night.
Shadows lurking on its surface
Dusty and dark, it isn’t that far
Illuminated by the distant sun
Lighting earth with radiance
Like a candle in the distance
A very frigid and bare place,
Travelled to by few people.
A distant and expensive trip,
Made by very few astronauts.
The moon is visible at night
When the earth spins around
It brings safety for creatures
As some prefer the darkness
Revolving our planet, Earth
circumnavigating the globe
Crescent shaped at times
The moon.
The Fall of Ophelia

Filled, she was, with joy and love
No worry in her except for an “us”
Us as it was her and her lover
Only time apart made them suffer

But all good things can be thrown away
As storms, dust, and troubles have a say
As does her kin, father and brother
Warn her to run saying she will not recover

Obeyed, she did, with a drowning heart
Kept away, she was, whilst tearing her apart
Tear after tear, she chose not to be close or near
Tear after tear, she chose not be close out of fear

Crying to madness she shifted and turned
To a darkness like the shade of black burned
Hot and furious of what she learned
That her lover denied ever loving her

Rejection sears and sizzles within the beauty of exterior
But as a death lives, the rejection becomes inferior
Lost she became as two flew, fast, flight
One to the heavens but one still within sight

The loss of her lover turned her around
But the cease of her father drove her down
Down under is what is to be meant
For she is one that could now be “God sent”

No longer was she filled with joy and love
But still no worries because she was now none
None as it was she is no more
Six feet under, no life as that is what death is for.
The Sacrificial Swan

Clothed in silk fabric and beaded jewels,
She walks willowy without wary
Her tranquil spirit illumines the main hall
With her new husband - Ho! For it is whom we must be chary!
Gertrude’s love for her lonesome son accumulates day by day
She reaches for her beloved,
Her swan-like demeanor shows constant grace,
But the fault of the swan is her unpredictability.
When thoughts are led astray, her son becomes a liability!
The boy, embodied in disdain meant for one thousand thieves,
With the secret scheme against his own crown - his mind demented-
Questioning the sanity of her lovable fool, Gertrude searches for answers
The swan begins to sink, her glimmering feathers caught in the cemented
She reaches for her beloved,
“Flee!” - she cried as she slurped the noxious syrup
Falling to her knees sank the sacrificial swan
her feathers bright as day,
Finally the ground engulfed her- until - all was gone
WILLS, SARAH

Sarah Wills
Age: 17, Grade: 12

School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Caprice Houston-Bey

Category: Poetry

Dear Ophelia

Sorry Ophelia
You lead a life of class and riches
At least on the outside
Living with witches you might get stitches
I see that you have cried
What role can you play in life
When your only say is your dress
You live on a edge of a knife
Sharp but careful nevertheless
Listening to your regulators
Like a lion in a cage
Don’t let them be your dictators
Let them see your rage
Your father always there
With your brother too
It becomes hard to breath air
“woosh” the time flew
No ones going to read your memorabilia
After your life of order,
When you are 6 feet under Ophelia
You won’t care for his disorder
Hamlets’ rage is poised
Although his voice is loud
Not knowing his noise
Sitting up in his cloud
Go to thy nunery
Your the the mad one
Go to thy nunery
You are not a son
Your beauty shines brighter than a 1000 suns
That's all you will ever be worth
You can try to get on the run
Do not forget they own the earth
Society can be so cruel
Don’t be caught sneaking around
When you are not like a prized jewel
You will never be crowned
Don't worry flower
They will meet sweet murder
Stand tall your tower
Among the disorder
If only the tree trunk was stronger
The silver river became your caregiver
You could of held on a little bit longer
Suddenly you became the killer
The Serpent And The Phoenix

The Serpent Strikes Again

The serpent slithers by. A creature of land brings death to all who cross tall, they can bring to the ground although serpents are not very strong, but their venom has no mercy. Just one scratch and the future is gone.

Serpents are not very strong, but their venom has no mercy. Just one scratch and the future is gone.

The Phoenix Prevails

Looking into the far distance, the phoenix rises again. The phoenix no longer worries about its past failures. After all, they are in the past, and nothing can change the past. The phoenix rises again, with new determination, to succeed where it failed before. Success is not easily obtainable; in fact, it is quite difficult. The phoenix knows that it must work hard in order to succeed. But the trials do not scare the bird. Instead, the trials fuel its determination. The phoenix is ready for
the challenges to come.

The phoe- nix
rises from
its ashes
to find a better tomorrow
You Fixed Me

You Fixed me

I used to believe that life was mundane.

You sit there and watch as the time runs away.

I pondered on making my time run faster,

A smile was something I could barely plaster.

The withering roses melt in the sun.

And yet you made it seem fun.

The dark was something anyone would fright.

But laying here with you everything is alright.

I don’t wish my time run faster,

With you a smile I always plaster.

You fixed me.

You made it seem like my pain was just a dream.

Now I laugh as the sun beams.

The roses wither no longer.

With your beautiful spring, the withering ponders.

You fixed me.

My shattered heart remains at bay,

Because with you the pain goes away.

Please don’t leave me, don’t you see?

You fixed me.

The summer sun refuses to burn.
With you how could I ever hurt?
My tired legs find secret strength.
I no longer wish to sit in pain.
I want to hike, I want to run.
I want to lay with you under the sun.
My salty tears come to no avail.
It is you that made me prevail.
And now you’ve left, now you’re gone.
You fixed me.
So what have I done wrong?
Is it though I can’t fix you?
Are you too shattered to mend with glue?
It’s okay, you can have mine.
I want to see your eyes shine.
You fixed me.
Let me fix you.
I’ll lend you my bandages.
I’ll lend you my strength.
Because even though I come undone,
It’s you I want to enjoy the sun.
You shall not fret the night,
I will lay here by your side.
The roses shall never wither,
For I shall protect the gentle petals from the beams.
With my tainted heart and broken screams.
I’m hurting, can’t you see?
But you fixed me.
You fixed me,
Or so I thought.
I’m afraid.
But you fret not?
My bandages have gone to waste.
For you never used them in the first place.
Your damaged heart refuses my offers.
Why is it I have to suffer?
You scream you shout, you call me no good.
But wasn’t I who listened when nobody else would?
You fixed me.
But you did not.
I fixed myself.
I stole back my strength.
For you never wanted it in the first place.
My legs are strong, my heart is pure.
Someone else will fix me for sure.
A sword of great might, to some may be a delight.
To those who are to be Slain, they will Disagree and Complain
For a sword has Strength, power, And might,
Essential to keep The kingdom Safe and tight
In a larger fight,
If the hero Wants to shine bright, then they must use all their might. Valor, Power
Attack and aggression-used to fight against Oppressions.
To protect Erect And fight For all,
As this is the Knights’s one True call

Fortifying, Preserving, Protecting
A shield protects the people. Creating a barrier for those in need and sheltering soldiers from the barrage from overhead.
The shield protects the will of the people. The bravery and courage to stand in front of enemy lines is daunting, but essential.
This bravery pushes citizens’ morals to be upheld, rejuvenated and called to unify. Called to be a binding force. A force in which they will be protected from evil, safe from harm’s way, and showing resilience in their society. The shield protects the people.

Despite the commotion, the shield remains still, sturdy, and stagnant. Absorbing the blows for the holder. Unfortunately, the shield will break,
and chaos will ensue. When commotion is high, you can only try to create your own shield, a shield that can be healed. A shield that once it, it is unstoppable, blocking negativity and protecting the mentality of the needy. The shield protects the people.
Power to Desperation

Silence surfaces in the session.
Standing there, tall and proud,
Acting like nothing is wrong,
Claudius stares over the crowd.

Behind the scenes Hamlet gets a tip.
Suspicion is growing wild.
A ghost to throw everything off.
Arguments so far are kept mild.

Hamlet knows the truth
And Claudius sees his rage.
Unsure about the fiery burn,
Investigation is born.

Worried, uneasy, cautious,
Claudius watched every move with Hamlet.
It’s hard to control such a young man,
Especially with the circumstances

A play shown to display the betrayal.
Claudius is a kid, emotionally unstable.
He realizes what he has done, but can’t imagine losing what he has gained,
Praying in a selfish, caring manner.

Imagine losing it all:
Losing the crown jewel of a King, the Queen,
The riches of a man in power.
He couldn’t. He wouldn’t.

His cover up is not the smoothest.
Plans after plans fail to reach the goal.
Madness and denial surge through his body,
As it starts to take a huge toll.

A final attempt.
Claudius encourages the devil.
His attempts crumble to dust,
Desperate like a kid and longing for freedom.

SLICE! Death.
Madness, followed by grief.
All fall as the showdown concludes,
Desperate and longing for freedom.

Works Cited
Samantha Yang
Age: 17, Grade: 12

School Name: Bishop Gorman High School, Las Vegas, NV
Educator: Caprice Houston-Bey

Category: Poetry

Hamlet Ophelia Poem

Innocence to Madness
Oh Ophelia, Outstanding Ophelia,
The epitome of beauty and femininity,
Pure and Virtuous, One who pleases all!
A girl that obeys with her head held up tall.
The Innocent that listens to her brother and father,
Will the hisses of their criticism become too much?
The beauty of a building slowly crumbling from the lack of proper attention,
The men kept her tame
but everyday began to feel the same,
Ophelia slowly loses herself to the despair and evils of her own thoughts.
Such difficulty to be an only daughter,
What more of a tragedy to lose a father.
Oh Ophelia, Lost Ophelia,
Slowly crumbling like the unattended building,
Soon to be abused and misused by the boy she loves most,
The piling of pain driving the beautiful girl insane.
The sound of her eloquent silenced death.
My Dearest Friend

Oh Hamlet, how life has come to a sudden halt
My dearest friend, I will not take this with a grain of salt
One day you're ordered to be banished,
And the next you have completely vanished.
Our friendship was like a four leaf clover
Hard to find yet lucky to have.
O God! O God! How fast you have left
How wretched and how cold-hearted
This is the ending we never wanted
We must weep during your deep sleep
I will share your story to represent your glory
Lend me your ears, for this is a promise I must keep.
Hamlet, the crown in which you deserve
You were the only one we wanted to serve
Hmmm...you bravely avenged your father
And brought back this cold kingdoms honour.
Never will this be old news,
Nor will your name be misused.
It hurts so much to say goodbye
I hope to see you then, when I die.
Half-Love; Half-Thought

Whispering, watching, I throw out my heart. Hoping and dreaming, that it won’t fall apart. Why, Oh why did I throw away my life? It brings me as much pain as a pointed-edge knife. The brain told me to do it, I say to myself. But, the brain controls my thoughts, not my dignity, not my health. The heart pumps even beats, thousands of times a day. Now, I feel depleted, forming back into clay. Sometimes I think to myself and wonder what causes my heart to pump. The moment that the wrong person takes away the heart, life transforms into a dump. The palpitations are steady and true. But, Still I sit here, waiting for my heart to come back to me, face pale and hands blue. Is the heart just an clump of cells, or is it much, Much more? It seems as if the only point of the heart Is to complete it’s simple chore. Beat, and beat, And beat again. This is all it’s good for. But, once you fall in love, the Chore becomes quite different. Once you discover your reason For the heart, the chore Becomes Magnifi cent.

Neurons firing,
Civilizations advancing, wars destroying. The brain is the deadliest weapon of Them all. The heart longs for actions, hoping, whispering, waiting for love. The brain completes it. Answers are hidden, memories are stored, and love still has no place in the brain. Egregious emotions flood into the organ, millions of times a second. And still, it is not pumping anything. It does not long for anything, that is the heart’s job. Then, what is the chore of the brain? What is the line between moral and immoral. Fire, fire fire, the cannon roars. Battle fronts are booming with moral rounds of fire. Pull over, the police officer shouts, shooting moral rounds of fire. But dare not shoot back, that is immoral. Where does the line stand? The heart may never comprehend this question, but the answer is in the millions of neurons firing in the brain. Your heart doesn’t stand a chance. All in the back of your head. All in the palm of your hand. Time only continues, never stops, never goes back. This is where the brain excels. Time can be trapped inside of our heads, guarded by the chemical connections trapped inside of us. When, oh, when will it end. What, will happen? The answer is trapped inside of our single brain. The brains withholds The key to life. Ideas, knowledge, time, it is what makes us unique, diverse,
human.
YOUNG, MAGGIE

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Category: Poetry

Heart: addresses pure love and admiration and Teardrop: addresses the painful side of love

My Heart

When I see you it just races, I am so blessed with your graces.
Such an amazing soul, You make me feel whole.
What a one of a kind person, Who I know will never worsen.

When I look at you I know you are the one, For me, you will never be overrun.
You are the best thing that has ever happened to me,
I know you are the one that holds the key.
In my chest I feel a bright light, All the time, even at night.
In my chest I can feel it glow, Sometimes even grow.
You make me better, Every time I read your letter.
You light up my days, Just with your gaze.

You are always on my mind, About how you are so incredibly kind.
I might not show you how much you mean to me,
But you fill me up with glee. I know you would give me the world if you could,
And that’s what makes you good.
The first time you walked in my door,
I could tell I didn’t want anyone else anymore.
You never fail to make me feel better,
Especially when you give me your sweater.
I just love you so,
Please never
go.

A Drop of Sorrow
A drop fell upon my cheek,  
How can something so small make you feel so bleak.  
A mixture of salt and water, yet so meaningful,  
Later can make you feel so regretful.  
You consumed me and made me feel so whole,  
Yet all these droplets can fill up a bowl. This memory will never feel distant,  
Even though I wish it would be nonexistent. There are not enough tissues in the world, To wipe away all that you left whirled.  
How could I be so blind,  All those times you were not kind. Just the thought of being without you,  
Makes me feel incredibly blue. I thought it was you that was best for me, With this my eyes become a sea. My eyes are so dry,  
Why do I continue to cry. As they dry upon my face, My heart will forever be in a brace