

HOMMOCKS

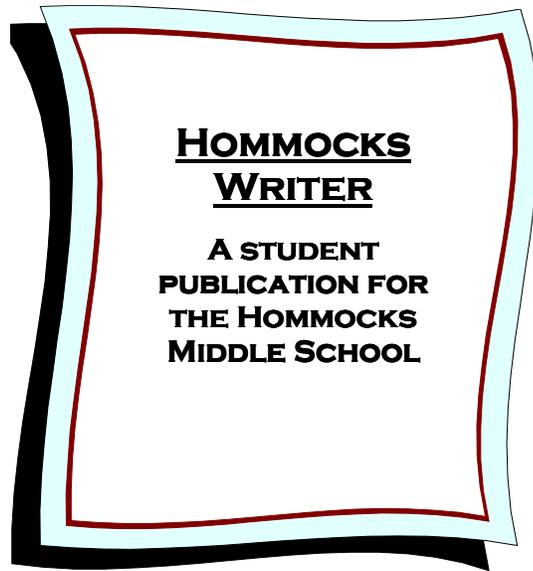


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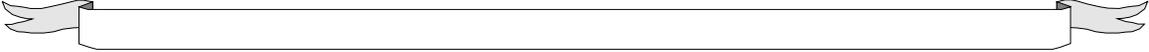
ADVISOR: Ms. McCURDY-LITTLE

**THANK YOU TO:
ARLENE JACOBELLI**

Cover by: Jonathon Melgar



Poetry Live! Winners



Opposites Attract
Inspired by Robert Frost

I wake up, ready to ride
I wake up, ready to cry
I go to school, eager to learn
I go to school wanting to yearn
Time to play football with my peers
Time to sit back, and show my leer
I drink from the fountain, the water sweet
I drink from the fountain, my mind feeling beat
I walk to class, being surrounded by friends
I trudge to class, wondering if the torment will end
I take a seat on my desk, enjoying my character's intense quest
I take a seat on my desk, back to reading Edgar Allan Poe's relatable text
I gallop to hand in my assignment, filled with glee
I go to hand in my assignment, ready to flee
I turn around and notice a sad foe
I look forward, wondering if the preppy would take a blow
I start a conversation, wanting to befriend
He opens his mouth, I wonder how to defend
I compliment his cool shoes
I stare at him, looking confused
I smile at him, knowing I have made another friend
I smile at him, knowing I have made a good friend.

Rayeed Rahman

The Box in my Room
Inspired by Mark Strand

The light is dim.
The room is small.
Pain seeps out of my eyes
As I see my life unraveling in front of me
The painted walls are cracked
Drip drop
The roof is leaking
Only two windows
One locked door
No one inside
No escape
The room holds the deepest memories
The memories of
Sorrow
Screams
Power
And
Life
My life
The floor creaks
A box
The box that holds the beginnings and the ends
The box that holds the truth
The box that contains
The chains
That have connected
My life
Together
My light is dim.

Tess Lepelstat

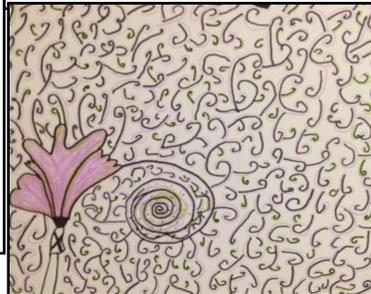
Whistling in the distance
Inspired by Mark Strand

I am confused
I wonder what will happen if I take a
wrong turn
I hear whistling in the distance
I see a door
I want to find a way out
I am confused

I pretend I'm okay
I feel lost
I touch my heart
I worry about my life
I cry listening to his song
I am confused

I understand this is life
I say it will get better
I dream about seeing him again
I try to remember the good memories
I hope to be happy again
I am confused

Valeria Maldonado



Layla
Ross

Catch Gone Wrong
Carden Olsson

Splashes rained into the air like canonns, what a blast! It was a summer evening of 2010; my cousins had come down from California to join us for the summer. Everyone had gathered in the pool. I was thinking about doing a cannonball that would have the family cheering. The grass rattled as my feet sprinted towards the pool. All of a sudden, I halted due to the unfamiliar inside whispers calling, "Don't go in!" Wonder swarmed my head and didn't pick up any reason.

Suddenly, my dad called "Cardo, let's have a catch!"

Adrenaline rushed like rivers through my body as I dipped my feet in the pool one by one, forgetting the thought of a cannonball, and focusing on the catch I was supposed to be having. The pool gripped my toes with panic, only allowing my hands to pick up the absorbent foam ball.

As it slipped out of my shaking fingers, the voices came back, echoing, "You will regret your decision." I stopped to ponder the ridiculous voices but decided to ignore them. Whistles filled the air which took me by surprise. My head jolted up and identified the whistles coming from the fifty mile per hour, ten pound, foam ball that had been launched by my dad.

"Watch out!" he called.

"What are you talking about?" The words had fallen out of my mouth.

Everything seemed to have frozen except for the ball. Its rapid fire was getting closer and I stood there in shock. It was coming for me and I had nowhere to flee. Screams of terror left my mouth as I cried for help. The monstrous ball struck my face, allowing my eye to be fully exposed to the sharp edge of the pool. It left me with no flesh or skin around my eye.

Blood was spilling everywhere. I stood there, uncertain what had just happened. Voices lingered in the background; they were tuned out like when your ears pop on an airplane. The only thing I could concentrate on was the red mess of blood surrounding me. Before I could cry the word help, my lights went out and I submerged into the red pool.

Beep beep beep. "Where am I?" I questioned.

My vision was dull and I couldn't see. Sounds flew across the room, and I could not locate where they were coming from. Then there was a figure that kept reaching for my face, each time I felt a little nip. As my eyes cleared up, I saw my mom and dad and this other unfamiliar man. He seemed to be wearing a white coat with a shiny flexible object around his neck. I thought about my day, to confirm why I would be in this frightening room.

Eventually, I realized that I was having a surgery on my eye and that I was in an E.R. filled with needles and ringing machines. That is when the panic hit me like an earthquake.

“Help me!” I yelled.

“Mom! What is this man doing? It hurts!” I sat straight up and moved the doctor’s hands out of my face.

In front of me, there stood a mirror. The mirror was no different than any other except for it showing the left side of my eye with a three inch needle lodged into it.

“Oh no,” my mom cried.

My face shot tears down like rivers.

“Take the needle out!” I screamed.

The doctor said it was a risk and could cause even more blood to flow out. *It was a feeling like no other. It’s hard only being six and experiencing this,* I thought. After hearing what the doctor said, I remained quiet and was unwillingly put to sleep.

Beep beep beep. I woke up again. The smell of alcohol reminded me of where I was. It upset me that I spent the perfect day in an E.R. I should’ve just listened to my voice inside. As soon as my mouth opened to complain to my parents about the earlier incident, the doctor silenced me.

“Quiet, I am trying to concentrate,” he stammered.

I thought it was rude, considering no one had told me what had happened and where I was, so I just laid there.

Later That Night...

The time reached 11 PM. The doctor had finished the surgery and it was time to go home. My parents and I thanked everyone for their help, and out the door we went. One last time, I asked my parents what had happened and they told me everything. Once they had finished, I felt like a brave soldier with a big bandage around my eye. As we entered our house, I was surprised to see every one of my family members waiting for me with concern. I knew that I was lucky to have them and really lucky to have eight different boxes of Kellogg's most sugary cereal as a treat!

12AM

In my bed, I recollected what had happened in the last six hours. I thought about the surgery, the little voice that lies inside, and how it taught me a lesson. The lesson was to always listen to its echo because it’s only saying what’s right for me. At first, it may have seemed ridiculous, but I realized that the inner voice had just been trying to help. From now on, I will listen to what the voice says. It might save me another trip to the hospital, I decided. I put my thoughts aside and gently felt the thick patch around my eye. One last time, my thoughts softly whispered, today was like a roller coaster. Along the course, there were twists and turns and bumps and curves but, in the end, it was a thrilling ride.



Natalie Shin

The Overachiever
Anabelle Hicks

At the beginning of class, the classroom roared with the voices of students who waited for the stroke of 11:31AM, when they could leave there and enjoy lunch. Oral presentations were today, and most kids were dreading it. But not me.

Even after the low-quality studying I did, I was not anticipating I would forget everything. After all, it was just a couple of sentences in Chinese. I only had to say the basics as in my heritage, age, and that I was a student. Can I say easy!?

“Are you going today?” asked my friend Quinn with a slight tone of worry.

“Of course I am! I can’t wait to get it over with!” I said, with a slightly unintentional snobby tone. I raised my hand with confidence when the teacher asked if anyone wanted to go before their date. The presenters before me seemed to do well, so how hard could it be? What I didn’t know was that they did five times the studying I did.

When the teacher’s voice called my name, I got up and strode to the front of the class and waited for her to tell me to start. I said my name and what it means without a single stutter. Next came the informational part. It was then that I knew I had made a mistake.

The roaring voices of my classmates started to dial down. All the atten-

tion was on me. Even though I could ask to go another day, I knew I didn’t want to leave it at that. It would be so embarrassing! I could feel my face getting as red as a ripe tomato. The little beads of sweat forming on my forehead made it look like someone misted my face with a hose. This was it. My mouth was moving but with no words coming out, almost as if I was a ventriloquist dummy with no one to say the words.

It was like I was stuck in the mud. No matter how hard I tried to speak, I couldn’t. Someone pushed my mute button, and they did a good job hiding the remote. I couldn’t turn back, but I had no backup plan. This was the situation everyone was worrying about everyone except for me. But how? I knew this by heart!

“Anabelle! Go sit down! You’re not ready.” Those last words were glued in my mind.

“Okay, sorry, Huang Laoshi,” I managed to choke out. On my way back to my seat, I saw the kids’ beady little eyes staring me down like they were the predators and I was the prey. I can’t blame them for being shocked.

I was the only kid who had to redo the oral. The only one that over-estimated herself. The thought made me cringe. I would go again on Monday: Prepared, unlike today.

Annabella Pizzarro

Two Poetry Live! Winners



Courage
Inspired by Richard Blanco

When the blind, see
When the deaf, listen
When the paralyzed move
When the lost, find
When the speechless, speak
When the weak, find strength
When the small, grow
When the disappeared, appear
When the fallen, rise
When the dead, live

Marianna Day

Wood in its Disguise
Inspired by Robert Frost

Wood cut in the night
Makes the fire burn so bright
As dusk turns to day
The wood slowly burns away
Ashes left to see
Are the only memories
So hard to recognize
Wood in its disguise

Julia Zimmerman

When You Understand,
Their Tears May Be The Last

Empathy isn't sympathy,
Nor will it ever be,
Be in someone's shoes,
Or apologize and say "I'm sorry",
Know what they're going through,
Help them through their hardships,

Lend them a tissue,
Or tell them you feel bad, one time or two,
It may seem insignificant,
Maybe when they say "it's okay",
Maybe it isn't true,
A broken toy,
A stupid boy,
A loved one dying,
Or best friends lying,
The difference is vast,
The gap gets wider and wider,
But when you understand,
Their tears may be the last,

Veronica Rubin

The Sapphire Inside of You

Whenever I look back,
at the things I should've done,
it's always about, something or someone.
There were so many times,
when I was too scared,
to think of someone else,
and if they might care.
I didn't think,
what it was like in their shoes,
I didn't know,
how to follow the clues.
Now I know,
the key to success,
isn't about
how you look or dress.
The key is kindness
to someone in need,
whether it's a hug,

or a loving deed.
Empathy isn't
being the best.
Empathy is
understanding the rest.
I know it's hard
to understand someone's pain,
but once you do,
You'll be the sun in the rain.
Now I know,
Empathy doesn't expire,
It is a gift,
A shining sapphire.
Reach inside yourself,
And find the empathy in your heart.
Find the empathy,
And do your part.

Mimi Lee

Praying For Rain
Frances McDowell

For as long as she could remember, Amelia loved the rain. Her parents told her when she was young that rain was the tears of god coming to absolve people of their sins. So, when the rain came they danced, celebrating the water like a blessing from god's gracious hands. These were Amelia's favorite days- the days when it rained- she loved the feeling of embracing the wet storm that mercilessly tore through the sky. It made every bone in her quiver as the chill of the rain shot down her spine with a unique sense of urgency, one that could

only be expressed in the spring showers. But one day the dancing stopped.

It was a relatively normal morning. Amelia woke with blurred vision and slurred steps. She said goodbye to her parents and made her way to school. The usual clamor and energy of the school engulfed her as she stepped into the broad doorway and fought her way through the sea of bustling children. Once the school day had commenced, Amelia began her trek home. The sun affectionately warmed the top of Amelia's head and scalded the

sidewalk. The scattered sounds of her neighborhood melded into a numb melody, resting in the back of her mind as she rhythmically pounded the sidewalk.

As she approached her house Amelia's eyes settled on a lacquered police car resting near the curb, its glossy finish glinting in the sunlight. She was not unsettled by this image. Perhaps the toaster had caught fire again, she thought to herself. Her key slid into the lock, releasing a satisfying click as the door opened. The familiar whine of their tea kettle filled her ears as Amelia walked into the living room. There sat two men in tightly ironed uniforms, accompanied by Amelia's neighbor Ms. Dillon. Amelia cautiously stepped forward and Ms. Dillon approached quickly, gripping her hand. The men stood, grim expressions resting in their eyes.

The shorter man spoke first. "Are you Amelia Fredworth?"

She nodded yes. There was no bitter aroma of burning toast.

The man dropped her gaze as his words echoed through the halls. "Ma'am, there has been an incident. Your parents have been in a car accident. They were killed on impact."

Amelia shielded her ears as a deafening screech clawed at her head. Her throat burned, and she realized the sound was coming from her lips. She dropped to the ground, her eyes blurred and the tears began to fall. Her head pulsed and the room spun until she closed her eyes. And everything went dark. Amelia willed herself to not hear the murmurs of the people

circling her, to not acknowledge the reality of this particular moment, and she drifted to sleep, a tangle of limbs, hair, and tears.

She awoke the next morning in a silent space. The beige room obviously meant to calm frantic minds, only seemed to make her thoughts race faster. A woman walked into the room. She wobbled slightly and took a few staggering steps toward the couch where Amelia lay. With a strained smile plastered on her face, the woman surveyed the mess before her. Finally, she spoke in a chipper- translucent- voice,

"How are you feeling Amelia?"

Amelia simply replied with a blank stare. The woman sighed, "I'm your local social worker, Lillian Merriweather, and you're currently in my home."

"What am I doing here?" Amelia questioned, shocked by the sound of her own hollowed voice

Ms. Merriweather replied quickly, "We thought it might be more comfortable for you here than at your home, you'll be staying with me until we find, a more permanent home for you."

Her eyelids weighted, Amelia stated, "I'd like to rest."

Ms. Merriweather appeared flustered, her words leaping off her lips. "Of course, I'll leave you to it." She hastily clicked away from the feeble form huddled on her couch.

That night Amelia prayed for rain. She prayed for help, for hope. Nothing came, nothing happened, and she awoke with the shining sun. The woman returned again, this time pausing in the doorway,

cautious to approach.

“I have some exciting news for you,” said the woman.

Amelia nodded, and the woman proceeded, “Unexpectedly, we have already found a foster home for you.”

Amelia’s eyes burned, the reality of this statement scaring her half to death. The woman frowned, disappointed by Amelia’s reaction.

Determined to please the girl, Ms. Merriweather continued “We’ve already packed your belongings for you, the plan is to leave around noon, and you’ll be able to move in immediately.”

Later that day, Amelia stared through the glazed car window at the house before her, the panels of its roof swaying with the wind. She left the car and carefully approached the looming house, Ms. Merriweather close behind. Once they reached the doorway Ms. Merriweather instinctively stepped in front of Amelia protectively. The door moaned as it swung open, and a stout woman stood before them. Five small children clung to the woman, their beady eyes searching Amelia, pupils dancing.

Finally, the woman spoke. “Is this the girl?” gesturing to Amelia. Ms. Merriweather spoke, “Yes this is Amelia, and Amelia this is Ms. Forth, your new foster mother.”

Ms. Forth swatted the children at her feet and they scurried away. She then invited them inside.

The house was dark, the distinct scent of mothballs wafting throughout, a

sudden breeze sending a shock up Amelia’s spine. The floorboards protested as she followed the women across the hall, and echoes of the kid’s squeals filled her mind. They entered a small living room, the flowered walls making Amelia’s head spin. Ms. Forth watched as Amelia sat, the corners of her mouth pulled downward, and Amelia decided her expression was simply the product of gravity.

They sat in silence for a terribly long period of time. Then Ms. Merriweather spoke.

“I imagine you’ll have no trouble settling in, Ms. Forth takes multiple foster children every year, she is quite the expert.”

Gravity once again took control of Ms. Forth’s face. Ms. Merriweather had a sharp intake of breath and began to speak again. “Ok, well Amelia I’ll just go fetch your bags, you two can get to know each other.”

Amelia and Ms. Forth sat on opposite sides of the room, both daring the other to speak first. Amelia’s eyes found her feet, a safe place to rest.

That night Amelia watched the cracked plaster ceiling above her, she listened to the breath of the sleeping children surrounding her, and she prayed for rain. Amelia prayed for rain when eyes burned holes in her back, when screams echoed through the walls, when in a sharp instant, her cheek was aflame with flesh striking flesh.

She prayed every night, sometimes the others joined her, their tiny heads clus-

tered and bowed, asking god for rain, asking god for hope.

One morning vibrations woke the house, hard boots on floorboards, as Ms. Forth approached. The door swung open ricocheting off the wall. Her voice boomed "Get out, all of you, go to the yard, out of my house." There was a special type of fury residing in her eyes as she violently shoved the littles out. Amelia followed quietly.

As she crossed the hall Amelia glimpsed out the window, and there loomed a curtain of storm clouds. At this sight, a warm sensation filled her chest. Amelia's prayers had been answered. She felt a sudden surge of confidence and turned to Ms. Forth.

Amelia planted her feet and stated, "I won't let you force them outside again, it's too cold."

All Amelia's courage fled at the sight of Ms. Forth's expression. The woman's eyes blazed. Brows knit, she released a low growl and clawed at Amelia's collar. Without a word, she thrust Amelia down the hall forcing her towards the kitchen. She grasped Amelia's wrists tightly, forcing her towards the open closet, her breath hot on Amelia's neck. With a final push Amelia fell forward into the waiting closet. She landed with a thump, the door shut, and everything went dark.

The dark closet, smelling of musk, seemed to be devouring her alive -- every black crevice engulfing her in its cold embrace. She had been trapped for too long.

Amelia had to escape. Heart pounding, she saw a small sliver of light, almost like the sun beckoning her from a cocoon of darkness. Suddenly she was struck with a flash of realization: the door was open. It seemed as if a ghost had released her, for no one stood before the door as it creaked open. Amelia carefully made her way out of the closet, her limbs brittle, a second from snapping under her weight, her eyes stinging and the colors of a bright world making her head spin.

But her eyes weak from the lack of sunlight could only make out a small figure fleeing, as if they had committed a crime for opening the trembling door. Amelia silently thanked the receding silhouette, then proceeded to regain her balance. She cautiously crept into the bedroom praying she wouldn't be banished to the closet once again by the compulsive woman. To her relief, she entered an empty room. As she peered out the smooth paned window, she faced a peculiar sight, for there in the yard stood the children, their heads craned to the dark sky, their glassy eyes brimming with tears.

A sick feeling spread through Amelia's stomach. The rain had fallen, It had shed its damp tears, and she had missed it. With a beating heart, Amelia ran. She sprinted through the doorway and left the memory of the rain behind. Her head throbbed as she ran, feet burning. She ran past the children, not daring to look at the traitor that was the sky. Her head throbbed as she ran, feet burning. An ever steady

beam of sunlight scorched her shaking body as she sprinted along the paved roads. Soon she spotted the forest, the forest would swallow her and her despair she thought to herself. The forest was safe. Looming trees grew bigger as she approached. When she broke through the barrier of green, Amelia was consumed. Slowly her heart began to work back to an even pace. She collapsed in the middle of the trees and let her aching bones settle.

Amelia sat in the wet dirt. Birds chirped and the trees swayed. She listened to the whistle of the wind and the rustling trees. She watched as life went on, and Amelia realized her hope for rain, for the past, was wrong. The revelation made her throat burn and her heart sink. With that

sinking pain in mind, memories of her former life flooded her like a tidal wave; memories of her and her family dancing in the rain, droplets of water hammering a steady beat. The melody of her former happiness brought the forest alive, and she began to cry.

Amelia sobbed, her chest opening and closing. Tears flowed, falling to the ground and darkening the earth at her feet. She split open, anger, fear, and prayers released. She let go, flooding the bright forest. She remembered, mourned, and did it all over again. She prayed for a new thing to pray for, and it bloomed. As a broken, trembling child looked up at a bright sky with hope. A sweet taste in her mouth.



Heritage Contest Winners



Ancient Europe

The garden of peaches
Tastes like the sun
Hours at the beaches
Hours of fun
Tomatoes and spaghetti
Aroma of bread
Now Italy has fallen
Corrupt and in shreds.

Off in the fields
The vineyards of wine
Smells like the wind
One glass at a time
A ladybug crawling
A swimming pool splash
But France is at war
So it ends in a crash...

Vincent Jacobe de Naurois



Heritage Contest Winners

Rohan S. Gupta



I come from a long line of great Indian cooks, my great grandmother who I call Ba, my grandmother who I call Nani, and my mom. We love Indian food, and have it often. Because there are so many spices, and flavors involved, I eagerly look forward to these Indian dishes.

My great-grandmother, Ba, grew up in India with little money and she took care of her younger siblings. She knew how to make the most out of what she had. Mangos were very abundant and free in India, so at her house, she learned how to make many dishes with mango, and it always seemed like you had a full meal with much variety. My favorite food that she makes is mango pickle, or *athanu*. She makes the best *athanu*, and she knows exactly the right amount of each ingredient to put in, which is why it always tastes great. She knows I love her special, unique *athanu*, and whenever she makes some, she freezes some in a bag for me, even though she doesn't see me often. She is in her mid-eighties, but she is still hardworking and loves to see her family very happy. Her mom taught her well.

My grandmother, Nani, moved to America in the early 70's, and she came here with only a slight idea of what it

would be like. The grocery stores here had different ingredients from the stores in India. She became a natural scientist, reinventing Indian foods with ingredients that she could find, here in America. When she went back to India, she brought back lots of tools to make Indian food. One tool was a *pani puri* machine. *Pani puri* is a hollow, round, crunchy wheat chip that is deep fried. After it is fried, you put spicy, minty water, potato, beans, chutney (a tamarind date mixture), and onion into it. We make the puris by hand, even though we could easily buy them in a store. My mom makes the right sized chunks of dough, the kids roll them into balls, my grandpa presses them into flat circles, and Nani deep fries them to make them all puffy. We put the condiments in and eat. The thing I like about *pani puri* is not only that it tastes good, but we talk and have fun as a family while we're making it. Nani brought even more of the Indian culture into my house. She helped my mom cook more Indian food. Nani always helps when she gets the chance, just like her mom, Ba.

My mom learned lots from Nani, and after her visit, she started cooking these foods much more than she did before, especially because we all loved it. She

makes food less spicy because we don't eat as spicy food as people do in India. Every year, on Diwali (the Indian New Year) we make *peda*, a sweet Indian dessert in the colors of the Indian flag. *Peda* is like a cookie flavored with cardamom. Most people just buy *peda* from the store, but we make it as a family, with every person having a part to do. My mom makes the batter, and then we stir in food coloring. The kids roll out balls and imprint a flower design on them while my mom watches and helps. We talk about what we're doing in our lives, laugh, and smile at the stories we tell. Not only do I love stuffing myself with this sweet dessert, I like to have fun

rolling them out as a family. My mom can cook very well; she gets it from her mom and grandmother.

Ba, Nani, and my mom are all hard workers, all loving to cook and eat spicy and flavorful Indian food. Their greatest pleasure must be seeing their families together, enjoying their delicious food. I will cook Indian food when I get older too, because all my loving parents and grandparents and great-grandparent love making the food that describes their - and my culture. At our house, we don't just pass the food around, we pass the powerful love around too.

Frozen

Coated in frost,
Waiting on the sun
Blowing in the breeze,
Freezing from the cold
Wilting, broken, frozen

My petals have gone black
With white encasing,
My stem is tilted
I'm falling like the snow,
Can't stand anymore
I'm far too cold.

My coat is the frost
My roots get no reprieve
The water I taste each day,
It is ice, and I hate it.

Where is the spring time?
Where is the sun?

The warmth, the laughter
The nice, flowing breeze?
Where is the rain,
The mud and the bees?

I'm waiting for spring,
And I wish I could hide
With the humans
Who get to stay warm, inside.

I'm frozen,
I'm cold
And I wish to unfreeze,
I wish to start bending with the cool, spring
breeze.
So still I will wait
For the sun,
For the rain
And soon when it comes
It will be safe once again.

Naviah Greene

I came here because I have a dream.
I came here to raise my child.
I came here for new challenges.
I came here looking for hope and justice.
I crossed the border to get here.
But you took that away.
I came here for an open hand.
I came here because I have a dream.
I came here because my child has a dream.
I came here because of my dream.

But **you** closed the door.

Because there's no open door.
No opened hand.
Nobody to look up to now.
I have a dream to get across the border
but there's no looking back now
I had a dream to get across.

Jasmine Morales

If you are Jewish, you are cheap
If you are black, you are a criminal
If you are Muslim, you are a terrorist
If you are Latino, you are an illegal immigrant
These are untrue stereotypes
That tear us apart

If you are Jewish, you are a human
If you are Black, you are a human
If you are Muslim, you are a human
If you are Latino, you are a human
If we are all humans, we are all equal
If we're all equal we're all the same
If we're all the same
Why are there still stereotypes?



Abbey Dean

Empathy
Anna Drattell

When your parent(s) tell you to always have empathy because of how important it is, what comes to your mind? Are you reminded of sympathy and assume that it's the same thing? Well, it isn't. In fact, they are two completely different things.

World-renowned American actor, producer, rapper, and songwriter Will Smith once said, "Stop letting people who do so little for you control so much of your mind, feelings, and emotions."

If you told me this just five months ago, I *would* have believed you, but I wouldn't have used that motivation to do anything about my crumbling friendship with a girl that I had known since I was three years old. She never made my life better. She never made it more wholesome. She never even *tried* to console me when I was going through rough times at school, so when she struck me like a flaming grenade, I had no choice but to stand up for myself one final time. And after that, me realizing how much she had taken control of my mind and her altering how I viewed myself, made me realize that I, and *no one else*, should *ever* have to feel that way. She was an *OK* friend, and the big quality she was missing was empathy.

Now, that's just empathy on a smaller scale. As if that wasn't painful enough, imagine a world thousands of miles away. A world that we don't always pay attention

to because we're not even acknowledging the problem. If anything, not in the right way. A world that is so stricken by pain, fear, hunger, poverty, and loss. If we don't work together to fix this mammoth-sized issue, then how are we ever supposed to move forward and succeed in the human race?

There are over *66 million* girls in the world who are deprived of education!! Feel for them. Wonder what it might be like to not have access to an *iPhone* or even basic medical supplies... There are also millions of young children who see friends and family get blown to pieces in war-torn countries. Is this *really* what the human race has come to? Is this *really* who we are?

Ever heard of Malala Yousafzai? Well, she once famously quoted, "Why is it, that giving guns is so easy, but giving books is so hard?"

Malala is known primarily by her first name due to her acts of empathy, braveness, and kindness. She believes it is every girl's right to go to school. She believes that you should use your *words*, not violence to solve our world's many issues. And I agree.

Few people actually *want* to help, but those who do use acts of violence. Violence is NOT the answer to our problems!!!! Why is it that people have the audacity not to even *listen* to people like

Malala? Although we are improving with this, we still are not done yet. The last 5% or 10% is the most important. What we do when we reach the last 5% or 10% will define what our future will be and what the world will be like in even a few years.

I WANT - I WANT - I WANT. Every day you hear people saying what they want. Well, this is what I want: I want people who are sick to be healed. I want children with no families to be adopted. I want people to never have to worry about shelter and heat. Most of all, I would like to see our people care for one another. Saying what you want isn't bad or anything, but at *least* try to say what you *would like*, because it seems less pretentious.

Think about it: people who are so stricken by pain, fear, hunger, poverty, and loss don't even have the *time* to think about what they *want*, much less what they *would like*. They think about what they *need*. They need love and support. They need help. We all have our own unique resources that can

help the global population in several ways, so if we unite to help each other we can make this a better, safer world.

We should be exactly like the American colonists when they united to help each other to fight against their common enemy, King George III in response to one of his infamous Intolerable Act(s). But this time, *our* common enemy is one that can't be seen: inhumane acts towards each other and a world that has such strained relationships between its people that even mysterious alien invaders will not recognize a thing. Not even the dirt or rocks. Even that can be changed when the world becomes shattered into a million tiny pieces. If a person changed their behavior and personality, their face might harden and their ability to (openly) love would also be gone like Dallas Winston in *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton.

So, when you think about it, who would want to live in a world that is torn apart?

Theft

The TV is the first to be taken
Followed by the fridge,
I hope that the thieves don't remember
Wherever the heck I live!

The couch,
The chair,
Even the mirror over there!
When I got home, the police didn't even care!

I take all the photos
For the insurance clerk,
But when I call the company,

They treat me like a jerk.

But now to the really strange part,
When I call the neighbors way down the street,
They are saying that having my stuff is really
such a treat!

So now I give you my advice,
Whenever you are away,
Just make sure,
That everything that is yours,
Stays that way!

Jerry Orans

Heritage Contest Winner
A Taste Of Home
Muitmu Njenga

On the Road

We see a kiosk on the street,
Corn is cracking to a beat,
We queue near the fire as we eat,
You can feel the crunch of kernels down to your feet!

In a hot summer race,
I rush to the fruit place,
Woo wee!! Hot pepper chili mango I try to brace,
So soft my teeth sink in deep leaving mango fragrance on my face!

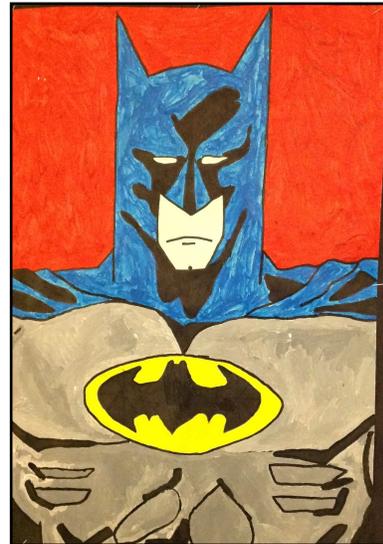
Mom honks to get the seller's attention,
He displays three long stems for selection,
Sweet sugar cane juice drips in every direction,
It quenches my thirst beyond perfection!

At Home

Nguashe and Ndoma are all about the same,
Both breakfast bulbs with different names,
Given a soft sweet bite I always want to claim,
I always eat a lot of this which is quite a shame.

Nyama Choma seals the deal,
It's roast goat that emphasizes the holiday feel,
Smoky, salty, savory, crispy, you can't believe it's real,
This goes well with Ugali made out of cornmeal.

I never knew peas could taste so good,
Well, Mocimo is the best ever mashed food,
Smooth and with texture it's easily chewed,
Baby or grandpa, teeth or no teeth, each bite lifts your mood!



Jack Leach

An excerpt from: The Mystery of Saint Louis
Pia Ducrot

Chapter 1

Saint Louis was a kind man that was the king of France. Unlike the other Kings of France, he was a nice king and helped the poor. The ones he helped a lot were the lepers.

The lepers were people with a disease that ate away at their soul. This disease is contagious so they were sent off to a distant island in the middle of nowhere.

It was October 22, 1256. King Louis was out with the lepers on an island. A leper was talking to him. "Thank you, sire," he said.

"You're welcome. If there is anything else I can do then please call me." King Louis got up and went to see another patient.

Meanwhile, on the main island, evil was brewing. Alvarez (the chief of the KTK) was organizing a rebellion. KTK was an evil association that planned to kill King Louis, (KTK means Kill The King). He called up some friends and they got to

work making a plan.

There were different opinions regarding King Louis. Some thought that he was a show off and others thought that he was the best king in the world.

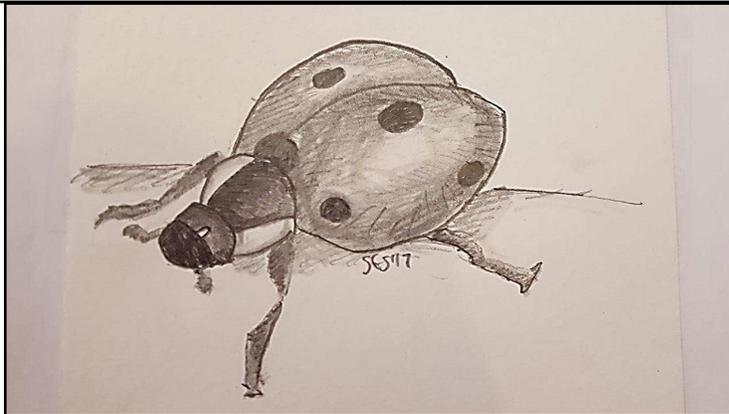
Alvarez told his friends: "My friends, welcome. Are we all against King Louis or not?" His friends shouted "Death to the King, death to the King!!!"

"Well, since we all agree, let's make a plan. What is the best way to kill King Louis?" All his friends started talking at once. The chief heard things like: "We can shoot him." Or, "We can hang him." But the idea that Alvarez liked the most was "Let's attack him by surprise!"

"Stop right now!! I have chosen my idea." He paused for a moment for suspense. "We will attack him by surprise."

His friends were quiet for a moment; then one of them started to cheer and that was all it took for the others to join in.

"Death to the king!!" They cheered: "Long live our chief!!!"



Sonia Suben

Poetry Live! Winners

Inspired by Billy Collins,
“Introduction to Poetry”

There is a difference
between reading
and experiencing

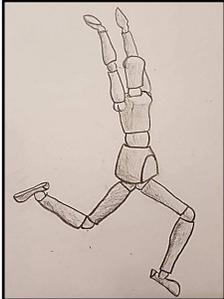
You must dive into the poem
Swim through the stanzas

You must taste the words
Sweet and tangy
Like lemonade on a sweltering day

You must smell the aromas
Inhale the words
Let them expand throughout your body

They strangle the poem
Tear through with no thought

There is a difference
between reading
and experiencing
Avani Bhalla



Lain
Brewer

Bitter as Gin
Inspired by Gwendolyn Brooks, fiction

The Populars-
Pretty, prissy, proud.
Strutting through the hallways,
Making others jealous without a word
Escaping their lustrous lips.

Polite to the teachers,
Get straight A’s in their classes.
In front of adults,
They’re as sweet as molasses

Cruel to the students
Who don’t fit in
In front of their classmates,
They’re as bitter as gin.

Never take off their shades,
Conceal their cold eyes of blades

I hope to live
To see the day
My envy towards them fades

Fashionably flashy,
Trendy, in-style.
Their exteriors are gorgeous;
Their interiors are vile.

When I’m near them,
I am far from a smile.
But I wish I could be one of them for a while.

Michaela Loughran

Billy the Bully
Kira Walter

I like to say that in third grade I was strong. I want to tell you that I stood up for myself.

However, that is not true.

In fact, third grade was one of the hardest years of my life. I didn't understand the suburbs. The grassy fields and the short and stubby skyscrapers. I often asked myself, *What is lacrosse?* And kids at school laughed at me. I cried and told my parents that I wanted to go back to the city. But not everything about third grade was so bad...

First off, I met a friend. Sashi was my first real friend in Larchmont. Sashi and I had lots of fun together. She stood up to bullies and she always fought alongside me. I had to admire her for her courage and power. Sashi always has a sparkle in her eyes and she is still very wise beyond her years. I have been told that we look alike.

Now, if you are thinking that I was a complete and total coward, this story may just change your mind.

Billy is a classmate that I didn't get along with. He didn't know when to stop. Billy was very small and, at the time, he was kind of insecure. Honestly, he doesn't look a lot different than he does today. He had a nasty attitude and always wore a devilish smirk on his face. The only memory I have of Billy without the devil

grin was when he didn't kick the ball in kickball and ended up in a rather uncomfortable position. But that is a story for another time. When I meet kids like Billy, I usually try to put myself in their shoes and imagine why they are acting up. But I always had trouble putting myself in Billy's shoes because they were too small. He enjoyed getting on my nerves which I never had a big problem with until he went overboard.

Do you have a little sibling? If you do, then you might be able to understand how I felt when Billy started picking on Risa. At the time, Risa was only a little first grader at an unfamiliar school. She is your everyday first grader - a cute little thing with missing teeth and high pigtails. Risa was slowly starting to grow up but she still had all her baby traits: from chubby fists to soft little feet. In everyone else's eyes, Risa was a first grader. But in my eyes, she was and will always be the chubby newborn baby that was taken home when I was two. Because of her tiny forehead, she had a gumdrop-shaped face. The only thing that really made Risa stand out were her abnormally chubby cheeks. She was younger than the other first graders and was a little miss goody two shoes. Risa and I used to meet at the window underneath the recess staircase. This happened while I was at lunch and she was at recess. We'd

try to push open the window of the cafeteria. Being there for Risa was very important to me. It was a warm spring day and Risa came to the window.

Then Billy showed up...

He sat down at the lunch table and began to listen in to our conversations. "Why are you here?" I hear someone question. This was unusual but I didn't care that he was listening. I barely even paid attention. I spotted my little sister in the corner of my eye and immediately ran over. "RISA!" I yelled. I bounded out of my seat and ran to the window. A surge of joy ran through me. The kind of feeling that you get when your ice cream sundae is all set and ready to go and Daddy hands it to you with a smile.

"Hi, Kira," she begins. My friends crowd around to see Risa and we make a ruckus. The lunch aide comes and tells us to cut it out. I forgot about Billy.

Billy was a short force of power cutting through a crowd of third grade girls. That was when things got chaotic. "Hey, Chubby," he tells Risa. Then he goes on and I give him a warning. I could hear the blood roaring in my ears. My fists began to clench. I could see some of my friends' smiles turning to frowns as he went on. This was not right. *Bullying does not happen at this school*, I told myself.

"Stop it," I barked. Anger burned up in me. But Billy didn't listen and Risa

was getting upset. I felt like Billy just took my ice cream sundae and was slowly devouring it. I had had enough. "Stop it!" I cried. He still didn't listen. I looked at Risa. She didn't look happy. I had to do something about it. I wasn't going to stand there and watch my sister get hurt.

Then I pushed Billy away from the window. He took one clumsy step backward and then he toppled onto the bench. I saw a look of fear in his eyes. It was a new kind of fear: An afraid little kid kind of fear. But now that kid had learned a lesson and I taught it to him. After that, he retreated back to his own table. Should I have done that? Was it the right thing to do? Maybe I was being just as bad as Billy. But I wasn't ready to deal with those thoughts yet. I felt like Billy had eaten all my ice cream, but that wasn't important now that I grabbed him by the shirt and made him buy me a new one. I had won the battle. I realized that I finally stood up to a bully. After that, the bell rang.

Lunch was over.

Back to class.

I won!

From that day forward, I always tried the best I could to stand up to bullies. I realized that I had to fight for my friends and family. I realized I had to fight for what was right. And that was exactly what I did.

Poetry Live! Winner

Crushed Consequences

In my mind there was a door,
Beyond it were infinite,
Varying outcomes. Anything could have happened.
The door was set in anticipation
Only unlockable by an act of true courage
The feelings about what was beyond that door were simply,
Magnificent.
Every time it recurred,
The temptation to set a plan into motion strengthened.
Creeping into the corners of my imagination were thoughts that had no feasibility,
No matter what perspective I was looking at it from.
For every time I saw her
Anxiety swelled within.
I attempted to gather clues
A look, a word, a tone,
Put them all together to build upon her vague views about me.
Eventually I became slightly confident of the mysterious matter,
So I did something irrational,
Guided by passion,
Without a bit of logic.
I went to the furthest extent of my bravery and reached out to her
Giving up the secrecy of my feelings
That night I was trembling in the wrath of the unknown,
Waiting pathetically by the phone.
A ding arose
I lunged at my device with phenomenal speed and dexterity to find...
A text
It was from the girl I wanted to reply.
It did not describe much, it was vague and avoided answering the fabled
and terrifying,
“Yes” or “no” question.

Puzzled, I replied and went back to my business.
My heart wanted to believe in hope,
But my subconscious knew it was the end.
My descent into crippling rejection began.
For the next few days, life seemed slightly dull.
Some of my emotions felt out of place
When I should have felt joy, I felt nothing
When I should have had pride within me, I felt nothing but an abyss
My inspiration diminished like a snowflake doomed to inevitable melting
The pillars of my self-esteem were eroding from the tides of despair
It seemed as if the negativity would run rampant—annihilate all of my
resistance to the forces of dark emotions.
Then, as if by some miraculous concoction of joyful feelings,
I conquered my self-doubt and rejection.
The world went back to its previous form,
Vivid, Brilliant, and Light.
The door was gone, and once again my mind was mine.

Jarvis Savage



Sami Siegel



Frances McDowell