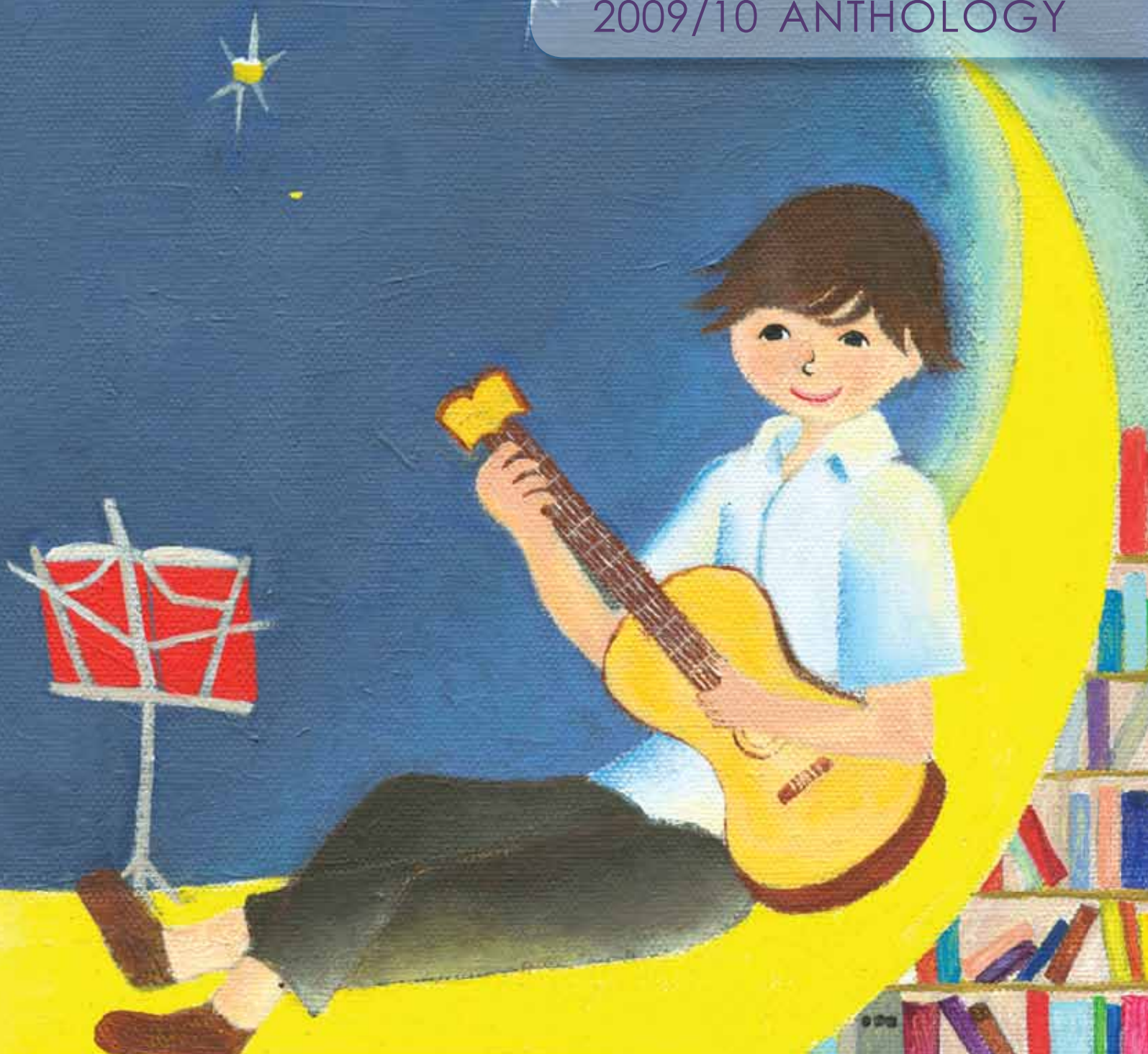




The Wonder of Words

2009/10 ANTHOLOGY



A Message from the Board of Education

We use words every day without even thinking about them. Words order our coffee, answer the phone, and tell us the news. They can also take us to a world beyond our day to day existence, where anything and everything is possible.

This limited edition anthology, ***The Wonder of Words*** showcases the talent of Burnaby School District's best student writers. Their prose and poetry represents their ideas, thoughts and feelings. Through the wonder of their words, you will find yourself caught up in their world or the world of the characters that they have created.

For 24 years Burnaby's **WORDS WRITING PROJECT** has been a great source of pride for the district. Its growth and success is a direct reflection of the

- dedicated staff who nurture the writing talent of our students
- supportive parents who encourage their aspiring young authors
- committed sponsors who support youth, literacy, and community

By reading this page you have taken the first step towards celebrating the wonder expressed in the words of Burnaby's finest student writers. Please continue reading – and then share this anthology with a friend. It is our hope that these words will inspire wonder in all who read it.



Diana
Mumford
Chair



Larry
Hayes
Vice-Chair



Ron
Burton



Tony
Coccia



Baljinder
Narang



James
Wang



Gary
Wong



BOARD OF EDUCATION
BURNABY
SCHOOL DISTRICT 41

WORDS WRITING PROJECT 2009/10 ANTHOLOGY

The Wonder of Words



To ensure students and the Burnaby School District do not contravene legal or copyright considerations, students published in this anthology and their parents/guardians have signed letters of authenticity confirming that they authored the original writing piece.

2009/10 ANTHOLOGY

WORDS WRITING PROJECT

The Wonder of Words

Burnaby School District's **WORDS WRITING PROJECT** provides K-12 students the opportunity to become published authors. Each year, a panel of judges with a background in writing and communications reviews the submissions and selects the best student writing in each category to feature in the district's annual WORDS Anthology.

From stories of adventure, journeys of introspection, lighthearted poetry and verse that is deeply profound, the limited edition WORDS Anthology offers something for everyone. We are pleased to recognize the following students whose submissions were selected for publication in the 2009/10 WORDS Anthology, *The Wonder of Words*.

Ages 5-7

Poetry

Khuan Mingchuar	Gilmore Community	Bamboo
Noah McGuire	Clinton Elementary	I Am An Inuksuk
Simran Garcha	Clinton Elementary	I Am A Raindrop
Shaw-Ern Seel	Aubrey Elementary	Les carrés
Bailey Crouse	Sperling Elementary	Un poème de manchot
Sierra Ford	Aubrey Elementary	Les quatre saisons
Lauren Klarich	Gilmore Community	Bamboo
Cassia Ruben	Aubrey Elementary	Les nuages

Ages 8-10

Poetry

Jessica Xu	Sperling Elementary	Je t'aime
Chiara Bertolone	Windsor Elementary	Music
Liam McColl	Brentwood Elementary	I Am From
Rachel Kuah	Clinton Elementary	Lost and Found
Jordan Pin	Sperling Elementary	Moi je t'aime
Chelsea Fong	Cascade Heights Elementary	La Boîte Magique
Jessica Liu	Sperling Elementary	Les couleurs
Gabriela Jocson	Clinton Elementary	My Friend Book
Jason Meng	Taylor Park Elementary	Thunder and Lightning

Prose

Faith Liu	Sperling Elementary	Le pingouin qui ne peut pas chanter
Ricky Yin	Sperling Elementary	Recycler

Ages 11 +

Poetry

Masha Michouris
Jenaya Kinlocke
Isabelle Ava-Pointon
Samantha Manalac
Kim Lau
Daphne Patterson
Clara Kim
Alex Manak
Riley Willson

Stoney Creek Community
Maywood Community
Seaforth Elementary
Stoney Creek Community
Maywood Community
Stoney Creek Community
Taylor Park Elementary
Chaffey Burke Elementary
Stoney Creek Community

I can't explain
The Eraser
La nuit
There is a Place
Poetry and Me
Where's my Poem?
Music
Poems Hide
War

Prose

Haleigh Crawford
Isabelle Ava-Pointon
Lydia Chow
Celine Shen
Eileen Liu

Inman Elementary
Seaforth Elementary
Parkcrest Elementary
Gilpin Elementary
Maywood Community

The Unflattering Life of a Teenage Girl
The Echo
The Woman
My Theory
Winner Take All: Chapter One

Grade 8

Poetry

Kayla Roffel
Isaac Li
Julianna Horvath
Oliver Lee
Natasha Williams
Annice Chang

Burnaby Mountain Secondary
Cariboo Hill Secondary
Cariboo Hill Secondary
Moscrop Secondary
Cariboo Hill Secondary
Moscrop Secondary

Man's Best Friend
In Five Short Days
La vie
The Capability of Trees
Vastness
Une mille dans mes souliers

Prose

Joey Whittemore
Jaya Lavin
Szerafina Pinter
Xing Yu Tao
Symphony Huang
Sammi Wu

Burnaby North Secondary
Burnaby North Secondary
Moscrop Secondary
Moscrop Secondary
Moscrop Secondary
Burnaby North Secondary

How It *Really* Feels
Obsession
Laughter Like Bubbles
Le plongé de ma vie
Souvenez-vous de l'hiver?
A Day of Many Firsts

Grades 9-10

Poetry

Walton Lim
Sweetha Mahendran
Sophie LeNoble
Celia Beketa
Naana Agyemang
Eleanor Hoskins
Michelle Scarr
Eleanor Hoskins
Destiny Hsu
Shannon Colcleugh

Burnaby Mountain Secondary
Burnaby Mountain Secondary
Cariboo Hill Secondary
Moscrop Secondary
Alpha Secondary
Burnaby North Secondary
Cariboo Hill Secondary
Burnaby North Secondary
Cariboo Hill Secondary
Alpha Secondary

Procrastination
Our Place
Équilibre
In Her Lifetime
Piano
Un Espoir
Seeing My Face
Moondog
Esperez Toujours
Poverty

Prose

Christina Yu
Crystal To
Celia Beketa
Brenna Barrett-Lennard

Burnaby Mountain Secondary
Cariboo Hill Secondary
Moscrop Secondary
Cariboo Hill Secondary

Kids Forced Into Playing Piano
Ça ne finit pas toujours bien
La Perfection
Le Myosotis

Grades 11-12

Poetry

Heather Dunbar
Alysha Li
Amanda Pion
Xenia Chiru
Carolyn King
Jonathan van Aggelen
Lena Ji
Eric Xu
Maggie Clark
Karim Nahed
Cathy Chen
Cathy Chen

Moscrop Secondary
Moscrop Secondary
Burnaby Mountain Secondary
Moscrop Secondary
Burnaby South Secondary
Burnaby Mountain Secondary
Burnaby North Secondary
Burnaby North Secondary
Cariboo Hill Secondary
Moscrop Secondary
Burnaby South Secondary
Burnaby South Secondary

The Voyager
The Conversation of Breathing
Soul Seeking
Sens oublié
Ode to a Cob of Corn
Carpé Facial Hair
The Violin's Serenade/The Maiden's Reply
Silence
l'Étoile Filante
Pour une dernière fois
How to Write a Winning Poem
Wall

Prose

Adam Glass
Kevin Fan
Rachel Kim
Aditi Shah
Yvette Rancourt
Victoria Lei
Marina Ren

Burnaby Mountain Secondary
Moscrop Secondary
Burnaby North Secondary
Moscrop Secondary
Burnaby Mountain Secondary
Burnaby South Secondary
Burnaby North Secondary

The Rose Patch
The Xargg Guide to Creatures on Earth
Backtracking Across Snail Bridge
La Réalité de Mes Sensations
Digging to China
Next
The Raconteur

2009/10 ANTHOLOGY
WORDS WRITING PROJECT
The Wonder of Words

Bamboo	Khuan Mingchuar	1
I Am An Inuksuk	Noah McGuire	1
I Am A Raindrop	Simran Garcha	1
Les carrés	Shaw-Ern Seel	1
Un poème de manchot	Bailey Crouse	2
Les quatre saisons	Sierra Ford	2
Les nuages	Cassia Ruben	2
Bamboo	Lauren Klarich	2
Je t'aime	Jessica Xu	3
Music	Chiara Bertolone	3
I Am From	Liam McColl	3
Lost and Found	Rachel Kuah	4
Moi je t'aime	Jordan Pin	4
La Boîte Magique	Chelsea Fong	4
Les couleurs	Jessica Liu	4
My Friend Book	Gabriela Jocson	5
Thunder and Lightning	Jason Meng	5
Recycler	Ricky Yin	5
Le pingouin qui ne peut pas chanter	Faith Liu	6
I can't explain	Masha Michouris	7
The Eraser	Jenaya Kinlocke	7
La nuit	Isabelle Ava-Pointon	7
There is a Place	Samantha Manalac	8
Poetry and Me	Kim Lau	8

WORDS WRITING PROJECT

Where's my Poem?	Daphne Patterson	8
Music	Clara Kim	9
Poems Hide	Alex Manak	9
War	Riley Willson	9
The Unflattering Life of a Teenage Girl	Haleigh Crawford	10
The Echo	Isabelle Ava-Pointon	11
The Woman	Lydia Chow	11
My Theory	Celine Shen	12
Winner Take All: Chapter One	Eileen Liu	13
Man's Best Friend	Kayla Roffel	15
In Five Short Days	Isaac Li	15
La vie	Julianna Horvath	16
The Capability of Trees	Oliver Lee	16
Vastness	Natasha Williams	16
Une mille dans mes souliers	Annice Chang	17
How It <i>Really</i> Feels	Joey Whittemore	18
Obsession	Jaya Lavin	19
Laughter Like Bubbles	Szerafina Pinter	20
Le plongé de ma vie	Xing Yu Tao	21
Souvenez-vous de l'hiver?	Symphony Huang	22
A Day of Many Firsts	Sammi Wu	23
Procrastination	Walton Lim	24
Our Place	Sweetha Mahendran	24
Équilibre	Sophie LeNoble	24
In Her Lifetime	Celia Beketa	25
Piano	Naana Agyemang	25
Un Espoir	Eleanor Hoskins	25

Seeing My Face	Michelle Scarr	26
Moondog	Eleanor Hoskins	27
Poverty	Shannon Colcleugh	27
Esperez Toujours	Destiny Hsu	27
Kids Forced Into Playing Piano	Christina Yu	28
Ça ne finit pas toujours bien	Crystal To	29
La Perfection	Celia Beketa	31
Le Myosotis	Brenna Barrett-Lennard	32
The Voyager	Heather Dunbar	33
The Conversation of Breathing	Alysha Li	34
Wall	Cathy Chen	35
Ode to a Cob of Corn	Carolyn King	35
Soul Seeking	Amanda Pion	35
Sens oublié	Xenia Chiru	36
Carpé Facial Hair	Jonathan van Aggelen	36
The Violin's Serenade / The Maiden's Reply	Lena Ji	37
Silence	Eric Xu	38
l'Étoile Filante	Maggie Clark	38
Pour une dernière fois	Karim Nahed	39
How to Write a Winning Poem	Cathy Chen	39
The Rose Patch	Adam Glass	40
The Xargg Guide to Creatures on Earth	Kevin Fan	41
Backtracking Across Snail Bridge	Rachel Kim	42
La Réalité de Mes Sensations	Aditi Shah	44
Digging to China	Yvette Rancourt	45
Next	Victoria Lei	46
The Raconteur	Marina Ren	47

2009/10 ANTHOLOGY

The Wonder of Words

Ages 5-7

Bamboo

Khuan Mingchuar
Gilmore Community School

Bamboo waterfall.
Birds singing in the sunshine.
Swaying in the air.

I Am A Raindrop

Simran Garcha
Clinton Elementary

I am a raindrop
Falling from the fluffy rainclouds
Looking at the world below
I wonder if I will drop on an umbrella?
Suddenly I drop on a slide
I land in a puddle never to be seen again.

I Am An Inuksuk

Noah McGuire
Clinton Elementary

I am an Inuksuk
Standing on the solid ground as a
snow-hair rabbit hops in freedom.
A snow leopard wanders across
the snowy surface ready to pounce.
A snow owl swoops down
and makes a catch.
The life of an Inuksuk is wonderful.
The world before me is stunning.

Les carrés

Shaw-Ern Seel
Aubrey Elementary

Un livre est carré
Une carte est carrée
Une boîte a six carrés
Un dé aussi
C'est amusant de chercher
des carrés

Un poème de manchot

*Bailey Crouse
Sperling Elementary*

Manchot
Petits manchots
Les manchots glissent
Nagent dans l'eau froide
Les manchots mangent les poissons
Glissent sur la glace
Noir et blanc
Manchot mignon
Mignon

Les quatre saisons

*Sierra Ford
Aubrey Elementary*

En hiver, il fait froid
Il y a beaucoup de neige et
tu peux skier

Au printemps, il pleut
Il y a beaucoup de fleurs et
tu peux jouer dehors

En été, il fait beau
Il y a beaucoup de soleil et
tu peux aller à la plage

En automne, c'est nuageux
Il y a beaucoup de feuilles et
tu peux jouer dans les feuilles

Les nuages

*Cassia Ruben
Aubrey Elementary*

Petit nuage est en bas.
Grand nuage est en haut.
Grand nuage est en train de pleurer.
Mais pas petit nuage.
Grand nuage est en train de pleurer
parce qu'il est triste.
Il est triste parce qu'il n'a pas d'amis ou
d'amies. Il n'a pas d'amis ou d'amies
parce qu'il n'est pas gentil. Grand nuage
voit petit nuage. Il descend vers petit
nuage. Il demande à petit nuage:
Est-ce que je peux être ton ami?
Petit nuage dit: Oui, tu peux être mon ami!

Bamboo

*Lauren Klarich
Gilmore Elementary*

Bright, green leaves shining.
Nature swaying in my head.
Dancing in the sun.

Ages 8-10

Je t'aime

*Jessica Xu
Sperling Elementary*

À maman

La vie n'est pas complète sans amour:
L'amour n'est pas complet sans famille:
La famille n'est pas complète sans toi!
Maman je t'aime de tout mon cœur!

Music

*Chiara Bertolone
Windsor Elementary*

I feel the beat of the music
vibrate through my body
The vivid sound taking over me
Fast pop beats make my feet dance
My hands up in the air,
jumping around my room
Hoping my parents won't hear.
The crowd in my head gets more exuberant
singing along and screaming my name
Soon – the songs start to fade away
and my performance comes to an end
I fall onto my bed into a deep sleep.
Goodnight...

I Am From

*Liam McColl
Brentwood Park Elementary*

I am from Nelson, Courtney,
Vancouver and Burnaby.

I am from the blades like razors
on the bottom of my skates.

I am from my mom's
homemade fresh lasagne.

I am from my sister's jazz band
and her jazz melodies.

I am from the excited screams
of my gigantic country
as we win an Olympic hockey game.

I am from the humongous red maple leaf
that represents my country.

That is where I am from.

Lost and Found

*Rachel Kuah
Clinton Elementary*

thick-billed parrot
amber eyes
feathers as green as leaves
flies through the forest
rapidly, rushing, never resting,
confused...
Where is her flock?
Where have they flown?
Have they been caught?
rude humans as annoying as wasps
snapping, striking, stinging
stealing her species for pets
looking up carefully
she sights a flock of color
soaring in V shape
flaps her wings furiously
flies to the flock
relieved

Moi je t'aime

*Jordan Pin
Sperling Elementary*

Moi je t'aime.
Je t'aime beaucoup.
Je t'aime beaucoup du fond de mon cœur.
Je t'aime beaucoup, du fond de mon cœur,
avec beaucoup d'amour.
Je t'aime beaucoup, du fond de mon cœur,
avec beaucoup d'amour,
c'est pour toujours.
Moi je t'aime.

La Boîte Magique

*Chelsea Fong
Cascade Heights Elementary*

La boîte magique
Il y en a deux types
Une boîte aux carrées
Et une autre lignée
J'en ai essayé la première
Où j'ai trouvé un grand lapin
On a joué
On s'est bien amusé
Mais un jour
Il est disparu
Au milieu de la nuit
Je l'ai cherché partout
Jour après jour
Je ne l'ai plus revu
Plus tard
Dans une belle journée
Au milieu de l'été
J'ai pensé que peut être
Mon histoire devait rester en secret
Donc quand j'ai revu la boîte lignée
Je me suis dit
Je n'ouvrirai jamais
Cette boîte magique lignée

Les couleurs

*Jessica Liu
Sperling Elementary*

Rouge c'est la couleur de mon cœur.
Blanc c'est la couleur
des lettres d'amour.
Rose c'est la couleur des fleurs.
Bleu c'est la couleur du ciel.
Violet c'est la couleur des tulipes.
Et toutes les couleurs ensemble
sont un arc-en-ciel d'amour.

My Friend Book

*Gabriela Jocson
Clinton Elementary*

Bring me to a different world
Let me sense your every word
Love, fantasy, reality
Test my sanity
Make me giggle make me growl
Keep me wide awake like an owl
Charming as a princess in her diaries
Rebellious as Eragon on his journeys
Look at you my new book
Time again for me to get hooked

Thunder and Lightning

*Jason Meng
Taylor Park Elementary*

I hear the rumble through the night
As I see streaks of flashing light
It makes the cloud glow all around
As again I hear that rumbling sound
The rain falls harsh and splashes high
As once more the lightning lights up the sky
There are those who fear this
bright, bright charge
The sound so loud and the
lightning so large
But as I watch it with big wondrous eyes
As I would watch fireworks on the 4th of July
It puts on a marvelous and glorious show
As streaks of lightning jump to and fro
The thunder comes from every side
The lightning makes no attempt to hide

Recycler

Ricky Yin, Sperling Elementary

Un jour j'ai bu une boisson. Quand j'ai fini, la boisson a dit, <<S'il te plait, recycle-moi!>>

Un jour j'ai lu un journal. Quand j'ai fini, le journal a dit, <<S'il te plait, recycle-moi!>>

Un jour je suis allé au supermarché. Je commence à entrer ma voiture, et la voiture a dit, <<S'il te plait, tu peux marcher au supermarché!

Un jour j'étais au supermarché et je suis allé acheter des ampoules. Les ampoules ont dit, <<S'il te plait, achète les ampoules fluorescentes! Ça économise l'énergie!>>

Un jour j'étais au supermarché et j'étais au comptoir. La femme au comptoir m'a demandé si je voulais un sac en plastique et le sac a dit, <<S'il te plait, utilise ton sac d'épicerie réutilisable!!>>

Un jour j'étais à la cuisine. J'ai jeté mes épluchures de patates. Les épluchures ont dit, <<S'il te plait, met-moi dans ton compost!>>

Un jour j'ai découvert que la terre est en danger et que si tout le monde essaye de recycler et marche à l'école, on pourrait sauver le monde de la pollution et du réchauffement de la planète!

Le pingouin qui ne peut pas chanter

Faith Liu

Sperling Elementary

Il était une fois un petit pingouin qui ne peut pas chanter. Il a les leçons de piano. Un jour il doit aller à l'école pour chanter. Il a dit à son papa, <<Je ne peux pas chanter comme les autres!>>

<<Juste essaye!>> dit son papa.

<<Est-ce que tu peux m'enseigner? >>

<<On n'a pas de temps, c'est presque le temps de l'école!>>

<<Mais...>>

<<Pas de mais!>>dit son papa.

Ensuite Petit a marché dans l'école. <<C'est le temps de chanter!>> crie Mme Rosea. Alors tous les pingouins chantent sauf Petit pingouin. Lia dit, <<Pourquoi tu ne chantes pas? >>

<<Je ne peux pas chanter.>> répond Petit pingouin.

<<Pourquoi tu n'a pas demandé ton papa pour t'enseigner? >>

<<Il dit qu'il ne peut pas m'enseigner!>>

<<C'est le temps pour recevoir les bulletins>>dit Mme Rosea.

<<Yeh!>> crie tout les enfants...sauf Petit Pingouin, parce qu'il sait qu'il va avoir les mauvaises notes. Tous les amis ont regardé les bulletins et dit <<Yeh!>>.....Sauf Petit pingouin, il a des mauvaises notes. Alors Petit pingouin marche tout seul à la maison. Quand il est allé dans sa maison, il a entendu son papa crié <<On est en retard pour les leçons de piano!>> <<Mais tu dois regarder mon bulletin!>> dit Petit pingouin. <<Je ne peux pas regarder ton bulletin, c'est le temps pour ta leçon de piano!>> crie son papa. Son papa a frappé ses pattes très fortes sur la terre qu'il fait sauter Petit Pingouin. Quand il est arrivé à sa leçon de piano son enseignant nommé Madame Welch voit le triste visage de Petit Pingouin et elle dit, <<Pourquoi est-ce que tu as un triste visage sur toi?>> Petit Pingouin répond, <<Je ne sais pas comment chanter et j'ai les mauvaises notes sur mon bulletin!>> Ensuite Petit Pingouin a commencé a joué le piano. <<Très bien, très bien!>> dit Madame Welch.

Soudainement il arrête a joué le piano. <<Pourquoi as-tu arrêté de jouer le piano? >> demande Mme Welch. Petit Pingouin a juste commencé a jouer encore. Il a joué si bien que Mme Welch a pleuré. Il regarde Madame Welch et il vient juste d'apprendre une leçon. Il a appris que tous les pingouins ont un différent talent...et son talent était de jouer le piano.

Ages 11+

I can't explain

Masha Michouris
Stoney Creek Community School

Why is it that I can't explain?
I know what to say,
I knew what to say,
And yet,
I couldn't say it,
It all sounds wrong,
If I open my mouth
no sound
will come out,
Because my heart is fighting against it,
It's a battle between my heart and brain,
Fighting to say
fighting not to say.
One day the battle will be over,
And I can explain
how much you mean to me,
But for now,
I still can't explain.

The Eraser

Jenaya Kinlocke
Maywood Community School

Erasing all the mistakes others have made
Swish, swish, swish,
what have you done wrong?
I just sit here, waiting for errors
I'd apologize for any inconvenience but
I'm the mistake eraser,
not the mistake maker

La nuit

Isabelle Ava-Pointon
Seaforth Elementary

Quand le soleil se couche,
le ciel devient noir.
Quand le noir tombe,
les étoiles apparaissent.
Quand la lune se lève, le loup hurle.
Quand l'horloge montre tard...
C'est la nuit

There is a Place

Samantha Manalac
Stoney Creek Community School

there is a place
a place I run to
every time I'm scared
every time I need to be alone.

in this place,
I explore every corner of the universe
every twist and turn
every road
every ocean blue

in this place,
I can run,
jump,
sing,
fly.

I am free
free from every sorrow or pain
I am alone
safe from any bad thing,
no longer fleeing from my uncertainties,
but no longer facing them.

I escape.

in this place I look on,
as other people face the treacherous
monsters that they come upon.
I am on the outside,
looking in.

amazing how many places,
how many adventures
a book can take you on.

Poetry and Me

Kim Lau
Maywood Community School

I grew up in this world
Not knowing my purpose
My poetry was born in the mountains
It took its voice from the wind
Like the snow
It gently flew down
Wondering what to do next...

Where's my Poem?

Daphne Patterson
Stoney Creek Community School

As I sit here,
Pondering this fundamental question,
My ancient pen,
Wanders aimlessly across the paper.

I shape letters,
Letters on this smooth,
white, fragile surface,
I'm forming words,
Words that, almost seem to,
take me nowhere.

I'm out of it,
Words that obeyed me so willingly last year,
Just desert me,
They leave me alone, craving company.

I'll stop right now,
Read what I have written most recently,
And make changes,
Edit, edit; finally I'll publish.

Where's my poem?
What was once lost has now,
at last, been found.

Music

Clara Kim
Taylor Park Elementary

A music box spins a light joyful melody,
as the birds in the trees
hum a beautiful harmony.
The music itself is very fragile, easily broken,
but the meaning is strong and clear.
It is a mother's voice to a newborn baby,
It is the sound of an angel calling from heaven.
It brings peace in your hearts,
The song is a lullaby to everyone,
it is a calling from home.

Poems Hide

Alex Manak
Chaffey Burke Elementary

Poems hide
From the soles of our shoes,
To the lead of our pencils.
They are floating in our minds undetected.
They soar above the paper waiting to be used.
Poems hide in our favourite story books.
They are on the tips of our tongues,
waiting for your brain to reach them.
Poems hide in our food.
When we eat them, our minds fill with ideas.
Poems hide in our music,
wanting to be listened to
They hide in our art, illustrated
Poems hide in our hearts,
waiting to be unlocked.

War

Riley Willson
Stoney Creek Community School

War destructs,
War destroys,
War never cares to look when
crossing the street,
War never cares to look for the enemy
War never cares to clean up for itself.

Peace is wise, it is young, it is nice and tidy
War is old, it is not intelligent, it gets more
hostile by the minute
It manufactures new minions,
bombs, nukes, guns,
Anything to make one side
Destroy the other.

War is tall,
Peace is short

War overwhelms Peace by a lot.
Peace grows,
War grows bigger.

War does not clean up its path of destruction,
even if values are lost.
War does not care about profit,
it cares about
the next
Victim

The Unflattering Life of a Teenage Girl

Haleigh Crawford
Inman Elementary

Life starts to look seriously pointless when you know you weren't supposed to happen. My mother, Anna-Belle Eclipse, wasn't supposed to have children. To her I'm her 'miracle baby', but if you saw me you'd agree that my *life* and *miracle* don't belong in the same sentence. My brother, Ian Eclipse, was arrested last night because he didn't obey his probation orders from the last time he was arrested. I don't fault him, since he's been through a lot of stuff that is really agonizing.

My mom's first husband, Stanford Mann was a hot-shot baseball player. Pretty cool, huh? Cool, until he gambled away all of his money that is! He left his soon to be ex-wife and his little baby Ian, practically in the poor house. And when I say left, I seriously mean he blitzed away without a second glance in our direction.

Right before mom's divorce, she found out she was pregnant with me. What a cruel joke. She told Stanford but he has never looked in my direction either. Yep, we're one big messed up family!

By the way, my name is Solar Eclipse, and I already know what you're thinking...my mom must have been drunk when she named me! I'm sixteen, born January 1st so I'm older than everyone else in my grade. I go to O'Neill High School in Regina, Saskatchewan. Regina's cold, wet, and really bad for your hair. Why couldn't I live in California or Florida or some place that's not here?

Since I'm on the swim team my long brown hair smells of chlorine 24/7. I'm really skinny, scrawny actually, and have transparent white skin that gets unattractively blotchy when I get nervous. This is just one of the many reasons why I don't talk to boys.

In case you're wondering his name is Jason Stewart; the guy I'm in love with and the guy who doesn't know I exist. He's really gorgeous. He has shaggy brown hair. His eyes are a magnificent hazel green and he has a band of vague freckles across his perfect nose.

The most popular girl in school is Ofelia. She's also my best friend. I don't know how we're friends, I mean, I'm plain, she's beautiful. I'm smart, and she's well, not. I'm invisible, and she's noticed by every guy in school, including Jason...I don't stand a chance!

As I walk into school, I'm greeted by the familiar smell of gym strip and disgustingly sweet stench of hand sanitizer. The nasty mixture quickly evaporates as Jason walks passed me. I close my eyes, inhale deeply and get lost in his delicious scent of banana bubble gum and Calvin Klein's *In 2 U* fragrance. And then *BAMM!* I walk right into an open locker! I have no idea where he came from, but Jason is there helping me up. Even though I'm wounded and my cheeks are hot and I feel like life still sucks I look up into Jason's concerned eyes and can't help but feel that maybe, just for a second, life does have a few good points after all...

The Echo

Isabelle Ava-Pointon
Seaforth Elementary

“Wow!” shouted my brother excitedly as we all gasped in wonder.

“Look at the lake! Oh my gosh, it must be awesome for canoeing!”

My family was spending a week at Echo Lake in the back country of British Columbia. A couple of hours ago, we had traded the paved road for a dusty dirt track that leads through the refreshing shade of the fir trees. We had just turned a bend and gotten our first sight of the stunning lake. Its still surface was only broken by the occasional ripple...and the colour! The sky-blue was the perfect contrast to the cloud-white beaches. Soon a rustic log cabin came into view, and, as we drew closer, we noticed the sign hanging in front of the doorway. It read: Firefly Lodge. Dad parked the car and we rushed out.

Not long after, we were racing down to the beach along a well worn path. When we reached the sand, we saw the dock that stuck out into the water and, beside it, a shed. In the shed we found two canoes and a kayak which I immediately brought into the water.

As I paddled away from shore, I felt myself becoming one with nature: Echo Lake was a Wilderness Paradise! Suddenly I saw a hump sticking out of the water and nearly dropped my paddle. After a moment I opened my eyes only to see the hump closer than ever. I would have fled but was too scared. When a long, slender, snakelike head popped out of the water, that was too much. I screamed at the top of my lungs and paddled to shore as a blur but not before I heard the haunting song that fell from the creature’s mouth, perhaps an ancient Echo?

The Woman

Lydia Chow
Parkcrest Elementary

She was dressed in a thin jacket, a ripped pair of jeans, and a pair of worn-out sneakers. Her bleached hair was tied in a cheap rubber band and loose wisps of hair hung limply on the sides of her face. Her emerald green eyes, flecked with gray; darted left to right cautiously. Large, dark bags hung heavily under her eyes, betraying her sleepless nights on the streets. Her chapped lips quivered slightly in the cold winter air. Her mouth revealed a set of crooked, yellow stained teeth, chattering noisily in the quiet night. She glanced down at her filthy fingernails, painted a shade of blood red, slowly peeling away. She peered down at the street around her, and retrieved a cigarette someone had discarded on the sidewalk. She took out a lighter and skillfully lighted it, and brought it to her lips. The woman took a long pull and tasted the bitter sweetness on her tongue. Then she threw it back on the sidewalk warily. She snuggled deep inside her sleeping bag, and prayed to God that she could survive another harsh night...

My Theory

Celine Shen
Gilpin Elementary

I sat frozen in the salon chair, a million thoughts raced through my head. One of them being why was I even there?! I sat in the middle of a smelly, cluttered, hair salon. In a way I wasn't quite sure myself, but thinking back I'm quite glad of that.

Just then, the same lady who had just chopped off my hair returned. She handed me a large mirror without a word. I was in complete utter shock as I touched the hair as if I didn't believe the reflection was real.

Before I sat in the chair, I had been completely sure of myself. Now looking at the pale-faced girl in the mirror, the only thing I was close to being sure of was that I'd just made a huge mistake.

The summer had been more unbearable than I would ever have imagined. Just a month before, my parents had divorced. It hadn't been a huge shock and I knew it was coming, but I felt bad. My emotions had stuttered out slowly, at first, and then exploded at whirlwind speed. I found myself shedding tears in the darkness of the night when all I could do was think.

I felt lonely. My friends were on vacation like I was supposed to have been, too, before it had been cancelled by the separation. Nobody was there to listen to what was on my mind. Finally, when my closest friend came back from Greece, she ended up making things worse. It turned out that she was moving away forever.

Maybe that was the reason why I was looking at myself now with barely any hair. I felt like I had been driven into a dead end. It felt like there was no other way out, so I decided I might as well start over. That had been my theory. Thinking that a simple haircut would change things.

Suddenly, I couldn't help myself, I burst into tears in the middle of the whole salon. Good thing I wasn't loud or I would've had a crowd. The hairdresser looked a bit startled.

"I tried telling you it wouldn't look nice," she said looking down at the hair.

"Oh no, it's not your fault. The hair looks just the way I wanted it," rushing as I spoke. "How much do I owe you?"

Before leaving, I took another look at my new do. I sighed and left.

Winner Take All: Chapter One

Eileen Liu

Maywood Community School

I sighed as I tapped my foot anxiously, while I waited for the bus to arrive. I spotted something rising in the corner of my eye.

Great, my backpack was levitating right in the middle of the busy street. I made a quick lunge, bringing the bag down beside me, but almost tripped in the process.

"I still can't believe I'm going to spend my summer at camp," my sister, Maggie, grumbled. She said 'camp' like it was a disgusting worm or something.

Maggie was beyond furious about being shipped off to Camp Sun Field for five entire weeks. She would much rather stay in the city, helping homeless people.

But unlike my unlucky sister, I'm not a bit upset about bad food or forced swimming lessons (okay, maybe that part I'm mad about.) You know why? Because I'm finally a witch!

You see, we learned back in the beginning of the year that Maggie got magical powers from our mother. Mom was really upset because she wanted us to skip the whole magic thing and have normal lives.

At first it looked like I was going to be the normal child, but just last week my powers finally kicked in.

Of course, my mom and sister were thrilled for me. They were really glad that I'm happy and that they no longer have to listen to me complain about not having powers.

Screech! Ah, the bus had finally arrived. "Bye, girls, I'm going to miss you. Remember to write home," mom said, giving us one last group hug.

"We will," I sang, trying not to ruin my perfectly straightened hair, while in the middle of a giant hug. Even grumpy Maggie came in for a squeeze.

"Bye!" Maggie and I called, simultaneously, as we walked to the bus.

It's time to let the summer begin!!!

* * *

"Name?" asked a nail chewing, girl, who was blocking the entrance of the bus. She was chomping on her nail as if it was a pretzel.

"Rachel Reed," I replied.

"You're in bunk fourteen," the girl told me, ripping off an entire layer of her nail with her teeth. I cringed.

The girl looked down at her nails and sighed as she ticked off my name. "I'm Nancy, your head unit."

I had no idea what a head unit is, but it must be stressful.

Nancy studied her clipboard and sighed again. "And who are you?" she asked Maggie.

- continued -

While Maggie introduced herself, I skipped on to the bus and looked for a place to sit. The bus was humid, noisy and, full of talking teenagers. There were a couple available seats in the middle.

Just as I was about to scoot into an empty seat, a tall brunette sitting three rows back, stopped talking to the girls behind her, turned around and waved to me.

Huh? Maybe she was waving to someone else, but she was looking directly at me.

"You can sit here with me if you want," she offered. I was totally dumbfounded. The girl had dark shoulder length hair, big bright eyes and seemed friendly, so I slid into the sticky leather seat next to her.

"Sure, thanks," I replied.

"I'm Kristy, by the way," the girl introduced.

"Rachel," I told her.

"This is Sabrina and Amber," Kristy said, motioning to the two girls she was talking to.

"Hi, I chirped, not believing my luck. I had been on this bus for, like two seconds and I had already met three people. "What bunk are you guys in?" I asked, trying to start a conversation.

"Fifteen," Sabrina and Amber said at the same time. "How about you?"

"Fourteen," I answered.

"Me too!" Kristy exclaimed excitedly.

Wahoo! At least I had one friend in my bunk.

"Rachel!" Maggie called. "I got us a seat up here."

I turned around to see Maggie claiming the front row. "I'm sitting back here. Come join us," I told her, pointing to the empty row next to me.

Instead of skipping over, Maggie glared my way. "I'd rather stay in the front, in case I get nauseous. It's less bumpy in the front."

There was no way I was budging from my spot. "Is this your first..." I was interrupted by Nancy, who was nervously looking around the bus. "You're all here, right?" Nancy, then pointed at each of us while, silently counting. "All, right you all seem to be here, everyone ready?"

"We're ready," Amber announced from the back of the bus.

Nancy's lips stretched into a half smile. "Everyone ready, to start the summer?" Everyone around me cheered and applauded. "Then, let's get this bus rolling."

"Is this your first year going to Camp Sun Field?" I asked Kristy.

"No way," Kristy replied. "My seventh."

"Wow."

"I've been going ever since-" Kristy stopped short. "Your sister is waving to you."

I turned around and sure enough, Maggie was fanning her arms like a maniac. What? I mouthed to her.

Come here, she mouthed back.

"Give me five minutes," I told Kristy, getting up from my seat. I walked down the aisle, careful, not to fall down on the moving bus. "What?" I hissed, annoyed that she had interrupted my conversation with Kristy.

"I don't feel that well," Maggie admitted. "Can you sit with me until we get to camp, please?"

I felt sorry for Maggie, so I plopped down on the seat next to her.

I looked back at Kristy and sighed.

I just hoped it would get better from here.

Grade 8

Man's Best Friend

Kayla Roffel
Burnaby Mountain Secondary

I'm not ready to say goodbye
 I would miss you too much.
 Your soft, comforting fur,
 and the way your big, brown eyes
 look up at me
 always seem to stop my tears,
 and calm my rage

They tell me it might have to happen soon,
 maybe a few years,
 or maybe only a few weeks
 The hardest part about letting go
 is not knowing when I have to.
 I'm scared.

And they tell me this will put him out of pain,
 that it wouldn't be right to make him suffer
 But don't they care that if he was gone,
 I would be suffering?

I feel alone.
 People are so used to talking,
 that they no longer will listen.
 So I will hold on to the moments I have left
 with my listener,
 my friend,
 My dog.

In Five Short Days

Isaac Li
Cariboo Hill Secondary

In five short days
 The shadows will blow
 And arise once more
 The fenrir shall grow,
 Snap short will the ribbons
 Soft as silk.
 Yet strong as iron,
 Which held the beast
 And soon
 Will be loose.

And in the ocean blue,
 Rests a serpent of greenish hue,
 With poisonous fangs
 That will strike the sky,
 And bring ever darkness
 To the land of men
 And soon
 Will be awake.

Yet in Asgard crowds,
 Stand warriors strong
 Who are brave and courageous
 And know right from wrong
 They are the Einherjar,
 Chosen by the gods,
 To fight the beast,
 Who will be loose
 In five short days.

La vie

Julianna Horvath
Cariboo Hill Secondary

Petits gouttes d'eau
Descend du ciel
Brillant sur ma peau

Je frissonne
Regardant le ciel
Une seule larme coule sur ma peau
Et ils n'arrêtent pas

Ils tombent sur le sol luisant
Et disparaître avec les autres

Accablant
Écrasant

Soudain le soleil
Radieuse
Il sèche les larmes
La souffrance est perdue

Je suis heureuse
Il n'y a pas de douleur
Tout est magnifique

Euphorisant
Electrisant

La vie

Vastness

Natasha Williams
Cariboo Hill Secondary

The taste of salt
on your lips
and the smell of it
hits your nose.

You look out
towards the sea
where the water
looks like it's running.

The towering waves
crashing, falling.
The rush of the ocean
roaring towards land.

The screams, the shouts,
the pounding of feet,
all drowned out
by the thunder of water.

But you keep on staring,
watching, waiting,
the waves so high,
and the ocean so huge.

The Capability of Trees

Oliver Lee
Moscrop Secondary

The trees are stalwart.
Opposing the wind they stand.
Durably, they hold.

Une mille dans mes souliers

Annice Chang, Moscrop Secondary

La vie est-elle facile?
Le monde tourne toujours
Même si je vis dans l'enfer
Emprisonnée dans la terre

Mes yeux, souvent foncés
Cachent des émotions
Mais montrent tout au soleil
Et brillent comme un champ de blé.

Il faut que vous sachiez
Que j'adore mon oreiller
Rêver des cauchemars
Le silence est encore un art

Mes mains maladroites et enfantines
Ce qu'ils peuvent faire, je ne suis pas certain
J'espère qu'ils ont du potentiel
À devenir auteur, ou étudier les étoiles du ciel

Mes pieds ne peuvent plus marcher
Ils préfèrent de me laisser tomber
Peut-être que je suis malheureuse
Néanmoins, je suis encore chanceuse

La chaleur, les plages, je les adore.
C'est une pause de toutes ces ténèbres
Qui me honte pendant la nuit
Quand la mer et les amis sont gratuits

Je crois que j'ai de bon cœur
Mais j'ai encore mes jours, des mauvais airs
Quelquefois c'est l'insomnie
C'est le bonheur qu'il a pris.

L'angoisse et la confusion
J'ai trop d'information
C'est comme ma tête est en feu
Je ne m'arrache plus mes cheveux

Je manque les petits soldats et les poupées
Même si je peux les re-acheter
Les détails, les changements sont évidents
Je ne suis plus le petit enfant.

How It Really Feels

*Joey Whittemore
Burnaby North Secondary*

Today I was supposed to go paintballing. Everyone says that it is the coolest thing and that the paintballs don't hurt (yeah right). I was very nervous. I thought about the people there. Was there going to be armour, what type of guns would there be? But then I said to myself just man up and get going.

I went downstairs to eat my breakfast, when I realized that I was ravenously hungry! I had four pieces of toast, a bowl of cereal, two yogurts, two chocolate chip cookies, and a glass of orange juice. After that I went back upstairs to get dressed, I had to wear all of my old clothes because today they were going to get to know the ground quite well. Jeans, hat, gloves, shirt, sweater, thirty dollars for the entry fee, and I was off.

Before going into battle, I decided that I would look around. On the field there were many man made bunkers and natural ones too (ditches, water bars, bushes, and trees). I noticed there were many roots, logs and rocks to watch out for when running and gunning. After 10 minutes or so my team showed up. We got our guns, overcoats, bullets and headed to the host for a safety speech. After the speech the team captain called us over and showed us our game plan. I was stationed on the left flank to take out any snipers and heroes that might try and infiltrate the front lines. As the whistle blew and I heard the first shot I swear my heart nearly ripped out of my chest I was so scared. Pulling myself together I looked out from my bunker, amid the shouts, the yells, the groans of pain, and the constant rain of paint I saw a guy sprinting towards my bunker!! Without thinking I took out my gun and shot him (lovely isn't it), and bam!! He was down! "Victory", I shouted!! (Even though the battle was far from over I ran to another bunker and didn't get hit this time (luckily).

One of my teammates was already at the bunker and just as I was about to look out he saw me and shouted, "centers hot!!" and immediately I ducked down and if I hadn't I would have been shot in the side of the head three times! I yelled "thanks!!" and ran back to the end of the field to take a break, and as I was running all I could hear was a, "phoo" like a gun with a silencer and I fell to the ground...oww...right between the shoulder blades...

I woke up in the middle of the night to an aching pain in my shoulder. I got up to take a look...WOW it was a perfect circle, swollen and red. Strangely enough I started to laugh (it was just too crazy). I know how nerve racking, intense, painful (and stupid) these games that try to imitate war are. So, even though I can never really understand what war is like, I now know how it really feels to paintball.

Obsession

Jaya Lavin

Burnaby North Secondary

When I was small, my house was pet-free.

This was because I am allergic to both cats and dogs, my mom doesn't like animals in cages and you can't bond with a fish.

Birthdays, Christmas, shooting stars and puffy white dandelions, I always wished for the same thing – a pet of some sort – but one year I saw a commercial that changed my wishes.

It all started one morning, when I was peacefully watching Sesame Street. Elmo bid me goodbye, and I willingly allowed myself to be tricked into begging my parents for useless inventions. However, a commercial came on that wasn't about toys, and I listened intently. It looked like a documentary on Animal Planet, a deep male voice narrating the antics of a wild animal. It was the creature that caught my eye. A hippo – but its environment was that of an everyday house cat.

The documentary went on to say that the creature ate peanut butter and toast crumbs, and built a nest in a nearby closet using clothing fibres and dust bunnies.

I was hooked. From then on my wishes transformed from cats to house hippos. I NEEDED a house hippo.

When my brother visited from university, he'd bring his pet mice and try to make them look like hippos. Despite my being grateful, I knew it wasn't real.

When I was five years of age, we moved further into the suburbs so I could go to a French Immersion Kindergarten. For show and tell I brought what I thought was a house hippo hair. I continued leaving peanut butter out, hoping more than ants would come.

Finally, my parents decided something had to be done. My mom asked me if I would be willing to take allergy medicine every day if we got a cat. Breathless, I agreed, and we went to Petcetra to get my first kitten. I promptly forgot about house hippos.

At 10, I was watching Pokémon on Saturday morning, and the house hippo commercial came on. I laughed and felt nostalgic as I watched it, curious as to what it was advertising. As it drew to where I thought it ended, I remained confused as they hadn't explained why they'd made the advertisement. Disappointed, I slouched in my seat as the announcer continued on: "It seems so real, but you know it couldn't be true. Don't believe what you see on TV."

And with that, I realized that I had completely ignored the point of the commercial, and since it failed so miserably it really shouldn't have been playing for seven years, or should at least be pulled from Treehouse. I figured that Treehouse TV was a bad place for it, and thought that over actively imaginative kids like me should be spared the heartbreak of discovering their favourite animal is fictional.

I'll admit, sometimes I still think I can see the house hippos running behind the couch or into my closet.

Laughter Like Bubbles

Szerafina Pinter

Moscrop Secondary

I hardly notice that the snow has stopped falling. The clean whiteness blankets everything. Everything is soft and round except for the deep channel pressed into the fallen flakes on the slope. The sounds are muted, but if you listen carefully you can hear laughter like bubbles floating higher and higher until they pop into nothingness.

“Again!”, we cry, “Again! Again!”

We’re breathing hard after the steep climb up. I push the sled so it lines up with a channel from one of our previous slides. We turn to our mothers, shivering just behind us. Their coats covered in snow, they look like half frozen snow sculptures.

“One more time and then we’re going home.” my mother answers, brushing the snow off my hat. My friend and I dive into the black sled, already buried in a thin layer of powdery snow, as if it was trying to hide from the two noisy little girls running around. We quickly dust it off, as one of our moms gives us a push. The plastic sled flies, it groans as we land and we howl with laughter in reply. Hitting a bump we leap once more. The sled seems to come alive, we speed up, faster and faster...

Our flight and our giggles stop abruptly as we ram into a wall of prickly blackberry brambles. We try to stand up, but the vines swallow us up. Turning in our seats we see our mums running full tilt down the slope churning up the snow behind them. They look so funny that we start to laugh. They skid to a halt and pull us out of the nasty brambles. We rescue the sled and we begin to walk up the hill.

My friend and I walk next to each other; we look back down the hill we’d just finished climbing. Then we look at the sled trailing along behind us. She smiles and I smile.

The snow continues to fall on the two little girls with their moms, walking the snowy paths up the hill. They’re going home, but they’ll be back eventually.

This is part of my neighbourhood, you can’t recognize it now without the snow. Although if you walk up my street, the one with all the perfect lawns, you’ll find one house whose lawn is a little less perfect (my house). Around the corner is our hill.

Quite a bit has changed since that day. They’ve built something on our hill, so the shape has different slopes on it. Now my little sister is older so we go together. It may be that only one thing has stayed the same. If you listen on a snowy day, when everything is muted, you can still hear laughter, like bubbles, floating higher and higher till they pop into nothingness.

Le plongé de ma vie

Xing Yu Tao

Moscrop Secondary

C'est comme un instinct et ma tête se colle directement à la fenêtre. Seulement là j'ai su pourquoi je me suis fait réveiller. Au-delà de la vitre de l'avion, le vaste bleu de l'océan s'est fait remplacée par le blanc des plages qui semblent s'étendre jusqu'à l'horizon et le vert des arbres et des plantes exotiques. « Ça c'est vraiment le paradis! » je me dis.

Joyeusement, je me trouve maintenant sur une plage blanche dorée avec mes yeux fermés. C'est vraiment un moment magique! Le sable sous mes pieds, le soleil qui grille mon dos, le vent douce qui joue une mélodie dans mes oreilles, le son des vagues qui frappent la plage et enfin, l'odeur salée de la mer turquoise. J'ai raison, ici c'est vraiment le paradis sur terre!

Brusquement, mon paradis est écrasé par la voix de mon oncle. J'ouvre mes yeux et je vois moi-même tout habillé en costume de plongeur. « C'est le temps d'y aller! » me dit-il tout excité.

Avec deux grosses bouteilles d'oxygène et neuf kilos de plombs sur mon dos, nous descendons tranquillement vers le fond de la mer. C'est vraiment incroyable, me dis-je. Nous entrons dans un monde extraterrestre, des millions de rayons de soleil pénètrent la mer comme les lumières qui allument la scène de théâtre. Devant moi, une gigantesque bande de poissons exotiques avec leurs écailles multicolores nagent devant la toile de fond turquoise. Ils accompagnent les méduses langoureuses qui semblent encore en sieste. En descendant, mes yeux sont tout de suite attirés par des milliers de coraux aussi colorés que les poissons. Par surprise, le gros corps d'un bateau frappe mes yeux comme le seul signe de l'humanité dans ce monde étranger. Nous approchons du bateau tout couvert de coraux. Nous encerclons autour du bateau et nous l'examinons. Évidemment, le temps a joué son tour sur cet énorme visiteur, le nom du bateau n'est plus déjà visible et le gros monstre s'est fondu dans l'entourage.

Soudainement, je sens une tape sur mon dos. C'est le temps de partir. En regardant le bateau pour la dernière fois, nous remontons tranquillement vers la surface. Pour moi, cette expérience sera toujours un petit morceau de paradis dans ma vie.

Souvenez-vous de l'hiver?

Symphony Huang
Moscrop Secondary

Lorsque j'étais petite, je me sentais toujours dans un monde spécial en hiver. Il est difficile de l'expliquer. Pour entièrement exprimer ce sentiment en profondeur qu'il mérite, il faut d'abord que je vous raconte une histoire.

On est au beau milieu de janvier. J'ai huit ans. Je suis chez mon amie et nous sommes toutes les deux sur la pointe d'une colline dans son arrière-cour. La scène devant nous est sereine; une couche de neige aligne les branches nues des arbres et couvre le toit de la maison. Par terre, la neige est tellement épaisse qu'elle cache nos bottes complètement. L'air sent frais et pur, c'est plutôt silencieux. On peut dire que l'hiver offre un sens de solitude.

Mon amie vient d'apporter son toboggan. En me donnant un regard coquin, elle saute vite sur le toboggan et descend toute seule. Des fois, je réussis de le voler d'elle et je descends moi aussi. Mais la colline est escarpée et souvent, je frappe une pile de neige pendant ma descente et je me fais lancer du toboggan, le visage en premier. En faite, avec mes bras devant moi et mon corps presque 180 degré de la terre, je ressemble un peu à superman qui vole...habillée dans un gros manteau maladroit et en criant de toutes mes forces. Pour un enfant de huit ans, on ne peut jamais être trop exhilarant, je crois.

D'autre fois, on se couche dans la neige en regardant le ciel blanc et pâle. Rien ne bouge et tout ce qu'on entend c'est notre respiration. Il semble pour nous que l'hiver étouffe tous les bruits, comme si rien hors de cette arrière-cour est important. Étrangement, je trouve cette isolation confortable. J'oublie toutes autres choses.

La nuit tombe et on ressent le froid. Mes mains sont devenues tellement gelées qu'elles ont de la difficulté à bouger. C'est alors que nous rentrons dedans.

La lumière à l'intérieur donne de l'assurance comparée à la noirceur dehors. La maison est non seulement toute chaude, mais quand je respire, je peux savourer l'arôme bienvenu du chocolat chaud libéré de la cuisine. Fatiguée, s'enlève nos bottes et nos vêtements absolument mouillés et on s'installe près de la cheminée pour nous sécher. Au centre de la cheminée danse un feu brillant qui émette doucement de la chaleur.

Sa mère nous apporte deux grosses tasses de chocolat chaud embué. Chaque gorgée de ce breuvage riche et sucré, je laisse couler lentement de ma couche à ma gorge pour réchauffer mon corps. Dehors, je peux voir les flocons de neige qui tombent paresseusement. En écoutant les « craques » que fait le feu, je réfléchis à comment je me sens en sécurité ici, hors du froid, à côté de mon amie.

En tout, l'hiver est une période de l'année spécial. Il déclenche les sensations uniques qui, pendant mon enfance étaient les plus mémorables. Maintenant que je suis grande, j'ai envie de les ressentir car ce sont ces petits moments qui donnent du sens à l'enfance.

A Day of Many Firsts

Sammi Wu

Burnaby North Secondary

"... and it's huge!"

I paused, grinning wildly at each of my friends' envious faces. Stretching my hands out horizontally, making a human T, I attempted to demonstrate, quite overdramatically, its rough shape. Eyes bulged. Sheer innocence, you might call it, but at that very moment, I was as happy as can be. Until, that is, someone flipped the switch.

It was the last school day till Christmas vacation as I rushed up the ridiculously steep hill leading to my house. My parents had reluctantly agreed to something life-changing just the night before; starting today, I would have my own room. I held my breath as I stepped over the neglected lawn, withering and weed-infested, onto my porch steps. "CREEAAAK" the aged, rusted screen door greeted me as I dashed by it.

Here I was, age 7, in the living room of 2894 Turner Street. I let the breeze rush by me from the wide, gaping door, painting my cheeks bright crimson. I sprinted down the hall. I pounced into my cubicle, my new pride and joy. The carpet, vanilla cream colored, matches my walls. My abused, secondhand desk stood to one side, my petite bed to the other. I walked over to my overflowing toy box and fished my hand in; my first time playing my own room. I smiled slightly when I pulled out my favorite Barbie. With her shiny plastic legs and long wavy hair the color of sunny wheat, she has many names; Daisy, Flora, Sally, Mi-mi. I guided her across the room, my fingers fusing with her artificial joints. I was just reaching the height of my game, when she rescued the helpless prince, when Mom appeared, weight shifted onto the doorframe. While gesturing that I clean up, her hand accidentally knocked the light switch.

"MOM, TURN IT BACK ON!" I pipe out, horrified. I can no longer see anything. My heart beats sound more like beats on a punching bag, rough and uneven. I am breathing like I have just run a marathon. The light flips back on. I'm still frozen- in fear.

I whimpered and shivered like a cat just out of the bath. Mom knew we were both thinking the same thought. "If sleeping alone in the dark scares you, come sleep with us tonight," she suggested gently. Just like that, the battle inside me begins.

The rest of the night was a mess, with my pride, confidence, morals and guts at war. I was silent during dinner for the first time in months. I brushed my teeth three times, until the toothpaste tasted just like the water. I would do anything that would stall my bedtime, but it still came, a disaster right on queue.

I climbed into bed and received an aftershock of the emotional earthquake. Both ways were desirable, but choosing either would have its consequences. I then realized that I couldn't choose, so I deceived.

I jammed my eyes shut and concentrated on making my breathing even. It worked until I heard the click of the light switch; my pump skipped a beat. I dared not to glimpse into the darkened world beyond my eyelids, directing my willpower into distracting myself; what will the weather be tomorrow? What will I wear? I do not know when these meaningless activities became more vivid, impossible screenings, but when I opened my eyes again, it was the dawn of a new day.

You may think I have failed myself, lied and cheated my fear, but I know I have succeeded. I will close my eyes and keep going.

Grades 9-10

Procrastination

Walton Lim

Burnaby Mountain Secondary

It's a new day.
 New opportunities,
 And more chances to take.
 I tell myself that today's the day,
 To get things done.
 At the desk,
 The papers surround me,
 But one thing stands out from it all
 Yes, the computer.
 With my mind already overwhelmed,
 I decide to take a short break.
 Or so I thought.
 Looking at the chaos,
 The clutter,
 The stacks of papers and books,
 But the temptation is too great.
 Hours pass like seconds.
 My attention is focused on one thing only.
 I take a break for lunch,
 and lie to myself again,
 I'll start tackling the workload.
 One glance at the assignment later,
 And all the motivation is gone.
 The weather is beautiful today.
 Everyone I know must be
 having a great time,
 Yet I'm stuck in what feels like a prison.
 So I ease my frustrations,
 With some procrastination.
 One webpage opens to another,
 Like an endless chain reaction.
 I feel guilty for procrastinating,
 But I just can't stop fooling around.
 So this is why I'm writing this,
 Late, at twelve in the morning.
 It's a horrible cycle.
 Work gets done later,
 And waking up gets harder.
 The days feel longer,
 And laziness destroys my motivation.
 All this, thanks to procrastination.

Our Place

Sweetha Mahendran

Burnaby Mountain Secondary

How dangerous the wind blew,
 Carrying away everything,
 All we have, all we know, everything.
 Our sanctuary has been destroyed,
 Shattered into millions.
 We too have been shattered.
 This was our place,
 It held together our dreams,
 Our hopes of ever being accepted,
 Now we have nothing.
 Now to start again seems impossible.
 But we won't give up,
 This is our place,
 We'll mend everything
 that has to be mended,
 We won't sleep until our sanctuary,
 Has been returned to its former glory.
 You'll see, this will be our place again.

Équilibre

Sophie LeNoble

Cariboo Hill Secondary

La rivière coule avec douceur,
 et je veux l'entrer, mais j'ai si peur.
 Les rochers robustes supplient que j'aïlle,
 mais ils sont aussi tranchants
 que des cisailles.
 Je trouve mon courage,
 et je monte les roches.
 Avec chaque pas,
 les poissons m'approchent.
 Ils sont si brillants que je perds la vue,
 je plonge un pied et je deviens une statue.
 Tants de pensées entrent mon esprit.
 Est-ce que je dérangerai leur abri?
 J'ai retiré mon pied et je me suis assise.
 C'est seulement en paix que la nature survit.

In Her Lifetime

Celia Beketa
Moscrop Secondary

He told her to never grow up.
 To sprinkle fairy dust and soar
 with lost balloons,
 prematurely set free by careless fingers
 in exchange for sorrowful tears.
 With youthful birds
 their fluttering wings never ceasing,
 experiencing the magic that she too,
 unknowingly possessed.
 He told her to soar
 because there is no limit to the sky.
 But with her old soul came heavy doubt.
 So heavy,
 her feet could only struggle
 to get off of the ground.
 And not even fairies' blessings,
 or balloons inflated with worries
 lighter than helium,
 or magical melodies of birds
 had the strength to lift her into the skies,
 beyond the declared "limits" of the world.
 And now tears drop
 as she remembers the ribbon escaping her
 fingers.
 Nostalgia sinks into her skin
 past her old blood, her old bones, and into
 her old soul.
 Every particle of her present being
 disintegrates into the foggy happiness of
 childhood she once knew.
 Her heavy doubt lightens,
 her feet are lifted off of the ground.
 And for a little while,
 her heavy, old soul
 becomes young.
 One last time.

Piano

Naana Agyemang
Alpha Secondary

As my fingers glide
 Across the cold smooth keys
 I hear the melodious
 Voice of the piano
 As it soars through the room

Un Espoir

Eleanor Hoskins
Burnaby North Secondary

Quand tu as appris
 comment marcher au sol
 Quand tu es partie
 pour les journées d'école
 Quand tu es tombée et t'es cassé le bras
 Tu n'avais pas peur,
 car, ma chère, j'étais là.
 Quand tu sors dans la nuit
 pour des heures interdites
 Quand tu commences un acte
 sans connaître sa suite
 Quand tu tiens un miroir et tu ne te vois pas
 N'aie pas peur, ma chère,
 car je suis toujours là.
 Quand le ciel devient noir en
 marquant tes pensées
 Quand les flaques t'avalent comme
 des raz de marée
 Quand tout tombe à l'enfer et
 ton ange s'en va
 N'aie pas peur, ma chère;
 je serai toujours là.
 N'aie pas peur, ma chère.
 Je serai toujours là.

Seeing My Face

*Michelle Scarr
Cariboo Hill Secondary*

You never actually see your own face.
You can look at pictures, you can look in the mirror,
But that's not your face.
That's an image of it.

I wonder what it looks like.
I wonder what people see when they look at me.
Am I attractive? Am I hideous?
Do they see a beaming smile, young and full of potential?
Or do they see a hopeless, jaded frown?

Is my face average?
Do I blend in with the crowd?
Maybe I stand out, with my fierce features and my piercing eyes.
I don't think so.

I see in the mirror, sapphire blue eyes, uneven eyebrows, a big nose, and small lips.
Inside my lips – a metal torturing device, what most call braces.
I see a large round chin.
I hate my chin.

But are others as shallow as I?
Do they see the exterior; the shapes and colours?
Or do they see my worn in expression,
My outlook on life,
Is my soul printed on my face?

My face feels chilled and smooth right now.
My lips are chapped.
My eyes are pretty, but tired.
My face wants to sleep and dream.

If I'm extremely, excruciatingly silent, and I blink, I can hear it.
The sound of blinking.
But my mouth and nose are the loudest parts of my face.
Saliva sloshing, mucus sniffing, and teeth grinding.
I wish my face would be quiet.

You never actually see your own face.
You can feel it and hear it.
But you can't see it.
I wonder, what would I see?

Moondog

Eleanor Hoskins

Burnaby North Secondary

Steeped in blue-black sky,
 I am a flake, spiraling home
 Coloured stars blurring
 Behind the snow
 I am closed against the cold
 Sharp-edged frost feathers
 Brushing my naked fingertips,
 Catching in my throat
 Crunching under running shoes
 Curls of breath billowing into the night
 A bright haloed shadow hovers radiant over
 Clear, grey-washed evening
 Trees highlighted, bare arms
 Scraping the border of the void
 Darkness hanging thick
 around window panes
 Red-eared and pale-cheeked,
 I am frozen, blood-mesh and bone-tangle
 Beneath the thin yellow whine of streetlights
 I have no windshield, no chill-breaker,
 No heater but my heart.

Poverty

Shannon Colcleugh

Alpha Secondary

The box sits out in the rain
 Dirty, Sagging, Soggy
 People stepping over him
 Feet kicking thoughtlessly
 They think he is empty

Esperez Toujours

Destiny Hsu

Cariboo Hill Secondary

Quand la froideur s'approche
 soudainement dans la nuit
 et quand votre sentier
 est perdu dans le brouillard,
 vous vous cachez chez vous
 dans les nuits les plus sombres.
 Vous perdez l'espoir
 quand l'orage ne s'arrête pas.
 Après le crépuscule
 vient toujours le lever de soleil;
 Donc ne perdez pas l'espoir
 quand la nuit faisait froide.
 Si le sentier a disparu
 pavez une route vous-même.
 C'est dans les nuits les plus sombres
 que les étoiles brillaient fortes.
 Derrière les ombres de l'orage
 le soleil brille encore.

Kids Forced Into Playing Piano

Christina Yu

Burnaby Mountain Secondary

I have a dream that one day we will no longer need to be under watchful eyes. I have a dream that future generations will not be afraid of classical music. We of the “KFIPP” society will rise from this predicament and end this madness today. We are “Kids-Forced-Into-Playing-Piano”. I sit there, in front of 88 black-and-white keys, wondering what noise I will make next. I sit there, wishing the clock ticked just a bit faster, fast enough to run away from disaster. This is what most of us must go through, and it is unacceptable.

When it comes down to extracurricular activities like this, my friends also have one of two kinds of parents; the ones that motivate the child through guilt, and those who just beat them up. The first kind is seemingly calm and patient one. “It’s okay,” they say, “You don’t have to play. Just give it up, all the money, time, and energy we spent would be a waste. But it’s your choice.” The good children, like me, would realize that the three words “it’s your choice” actually means “do or die”. The others would run off and go on the computer, believing that this is a free ticket out. Then the parents would ask “Are you sure about this?” as a final warning, and if the kid really is sure, the parents would bring out a belt.

So either way, the child gets a beating. These adults also use different methods in “negotiating” with their children. My friend’s mom used to scare her with a golf stick. My mom’s friend’s son would hide under his bed whenever he is asked to practice. In this case, the entire family would bring out a broomstick and poke him from underneath until he surrendered...he is seventeen.

But have no fear! I have devised a few simple plans that can apply to every member of this society. The easiest one of all would be to run away from home. It is simple, quick, and your burden is not as heavy as your parents’. Secondly, you could sell your piano on eBay behind your parents’ backs. This requires a lot of free time, sneaky skills and a computer. Thirdly, you can bribe your piano teacher to inform your parents that you have no musical talent whatsoever. He/she might also throw in a word suggesting that you be allowed to quit. Twenty bucks should do the trick. But if you have a mom like mine, she’d probably reply, “Please improve my child.”

So if all of the above does not work out for you—either because you are a bad liar or don’t have eBay—you can always destroy the instrument altogether. First step, acquire an ax somehow and slash it right through the middle. Next, throw the ax out the window, pray that there is no one underneath it, and remove the rest of the evidence. Finally, run out the door and wait till your mom brings out the latest weapon. But no matter the consequences, we must refuse to be part of this vulnerable generation. We must let our voices be heard, our axes be used, and become the revolutionists of anti-piano-ism!

Ça ne finit pas toujours bien

Crystal To

Cariboo Hill Secondary

«Allez! Dépêchez-vous!» Elle criait. Son ton avait l'air sérieux mais ses yeux riaient doucement. Elle sprintait vers mon auto et sautait dans le siège du conducteur. Je suis arrivé presque au même temps, car je pouvais courir plus vite, et je l'ai poussé au siège passager. Nous riions tous les deux et l'instant était si génial que j'ai presque oublié la raison pour laquelle nous étions ici. Je me figeais avec les clés dans l'allumage. Mes mains tremblaient quand je démarrais l'auto et je collais un sourire sur mon visage pour masquer la douleur. J'espérais qu'elle n'a pas remarqué cette milliseconde de défaite, mais sans le regarder je pouvais sentir qu'elle est devenue silencieuse. Ça alors! Il faisait froid ici.

Je m'appelle Parker, et la fille assise à mon côté est Julie. Non, elle n'est pas ma petite amie, mais nous étions des meilleurs amis depuis treize ans. Quand je l'ai rencontré dans la maternelle, elle était une fille toute petite avec toute l'attitude insoumise d'un ado. C'était palpitant d'avoir une amie si féroce, si libre, comme un beau tigre sauvage. Aujourd'hui, elle est toujours capable de me prendre par surprise, de me rendre essoufflé. Je l'aimais comme une sœur, mais la règle est que si tu aimes quelqu'un avec un esprit libre, un jour, il viendra le temps de le laisser partir.

Comme toujours, c'était Julie qui brisait le silence. «Voyons, c'est mon dernier jour ici, est-ce que tu veux vraiment le passer comme ça?» C'est la première fois depuis sa décision d'aller étudier en Angleterre et voyager le monde que j'ai entendu une touche de regret dans sa voix. Et elle n'exagérait pas – il était déjà 18h00, et elle partira demain. Après une hésitation, j'ai répondu «Souviens-tu de la troisième année, quand tu m'as poussé dans l'océan?»

Son sourire est revenu. «Oui, et tu ne savais pas quand même nager! J'ai dû te sauver et tu étais si fâché que tu m'as ignoré pour une semaine entière!»

Nous tombions dans un silence nostalgique pendant que nous rejouions la fin de cette histoire dans nos têtes : un après-midi, je me promenais seul à la plage quand j'ai remarqué une figure assise sur le dock – c'était Julie. Quand je me suis rendu plus près, le reflet des larmes sur son visage me faisait perdre tout contrôle et je sprintais vers elle en marmonnant 'désolé, désolé'. En arrivant nous avons recommencé où nous nous sommes arrêtés la semaine dernière. Je me suis lancé dans l'océan et elle m'enseignait comment nager.

À présent, je tournais à gauche pour nous rendre sur l'autoroute. J'ouvrais la fenêtre (avec de l'effort, l'auto est bien vieille) et l'air du début du printemps ne me semblait plus froid, mais frais. J'ai appuyé sur l'accélérateur et nous lassions derrière nous à toute vitesse la ville, le monde, et la réalité.

Nous avons pris ma voiture et nous avons conduit aussi loin que nous pouvions.

Nous avons parlé de tout et de rien.

La vie est belle.

- continued -

Le soleil était en train de se coucher quand j'ai finalement arrêté la voiture dans le plein milieu de nulle part, où l'herbe était en abondance, les lucioles dansaient à la mélodie de la brise, et le ronflement des insectes se reposait tranquillement sur une couche de mémoire doux-amer. Le ciel était la couleur d'un cocktail Shirley Temple, mélangé délicatement avec tout le talent d'un artiste de graffiti.

Quand il faisait complètement noir, nous étions sur nos dos sur l'herbe refroidie en traçant les étoiles avec nos doigts.

À un moment donné, j'avais la gorge serrée mais j'ai pris sa main, et d'un ton ferme : «Tu vas me manquer plus que je peux même imaginer maintenant. T'es...t'es tout pour moi, la seule personne en qui j'ai toute confiance, comme une sœur. Je dois te laisser savoir que je t'aime.»

Elle savait. «Je t'aime, Parker.»

Son visage était tout ce dont j'avais besoin.

Et nous étions là pour ce qui semblait comme des heures, une nuit que je ne voulais jamais terminer. En fin compte, nous avons dû retourner à l'auto pour retourner à ville. Le temps est venu, et je suis prêt de la laisser voler.

Dans un état d'émotion engourdie, je n'ai vu rien mais soudainement la rue tournait violemment et le verre brisé était dans mon visage dans mes cheveux et le bruit était assourdissant avec les fracas et le crissement des pneus et ce qui semblait comme mes cris et les cris de Julie, Julie! Je cherchais désespérément pour Julie mais le monde risque de tomber et

Silence. Noir.

La Perfection

Celia Beketa

Moscrop Secondary

Elle a été toujours la fille parfaite...dès le moment où elle a été née. La façon dont le soleil utilisait ces cheveux blonds et bouclés comme un miroir donnait assez d'une raison de la regarder. La façon dont elle portait chaque jour une tenue choquante et différente donnait assez d'une raison de la remarquer de loin. Elle avait la puissance à stupéfier et à dérouter les gens, moi inclut. Elle était si parfaite que je ne peux pas me rappeler d'un moment où j'étais plus jalouse. Mais contrairement aux pensées des autres, je savais qu'il y aurait quelque chose derrière son beau visage, et je voulais trouver ce qu'elle cachait.

Je savais qu'elle était la meilleure étudiante dans notre année. Elle était un mannequin pour Teen Vogue. Elle s'engageait comme volontaire aux charités des enfants chaque samedi. Elle était donnée le rôle principal dans la pièce de théâtre à l'école. De puis, elle créait du temps pour frayer avec toutes ses nombreuses amies. Mais tout le monde savait ces choses. Quelle était sa faiblesse? Quelqu'un ne peut pas être parfait...ce n'est pas possible.

Je l'ai suivie. Je l'ai suivie pendant une quantité innombrable de jours. Pendant sa promenade à l'école et de l'école, c'était les rails du chemin de fer près de sa maison que j'ai trouvés comme l'endroit le plus intéressant. Elle n'a pas simplement passé devant les rails deux fois par jour. Chaque fois qu'elle les a passés, elle s'était assise au milieu. Elle fixait ses yeux sur les rails d'un air absent, faisant face à la direction de laquelle le train apparaîtrait, et elle a pleuré...une statue mélancolie. Un train viendrait, et elle resterait assise, saisissant les rails avec les articulations blancs et les larmes coulants à flots de ses yeux bien fermés. Chaque fois, je croyais qu'elle allait être finie, mais quand elle était séparée du train par seulement quelques mètres, elle s'échappait des rails et elle a débarqué sur la terre ferme et sûre.

* * *

Je ne pouvais plus regarder cette fille comme si j'étais un spectateur. Il était un matin froid et ensoleillé, le jour que je lui ai parlé pour la première fois. Elle était assise en tremblant sur les rails encore, la position dans laquelle je l'avais vu des dizaines de fois. Je l'ai approchée, mes pieds traînants dans le gravier.

«Pourquoi le fais-tu» j'ai demandé. Elle a haleté brusquement et m'a regardé. «Qui es-tu» J'ai commencé à devenir impatiente. «Je suis une fille qui peut voir sous ton extérieur de 'perfection' et c'est pour cette raison que je veux t'aider. Je ne comprends pas...tu as tout. Alors pourquoi le fais-tu?» «Tu penses que j'ai tout? Le bonheur est tout.» Elle a dit. «Je n'ai rien. »

Le train nous approchait. J'ai atteint ma main envers la sienne. Elle m'a regardé dans les yeux, et je pouvais voir qu'elle considérait vraiment cette fois-ci de le faire. Mais dans la seconde qui restait, elle a saisi ma main. Elle voulait encore du temps.

Le Myosotis

*Brenna Barrett-Lennard
Cariboo Hill Secondary*

La nuit était noire, la lune était ronde et lumineuse, et la neige a couvert la terre comme un manteau de blanche glaciale. L'autoroute où les voitures conduisaient semblait comme une rivière de lumière dans la brume. Toute seule, une petite fille regardait fixement dehors de la fenêtre de sa maison avec des yeux comme des myosotis. Quand elle a entendu le son de la clé dans la porte tout son visage était illuminé par un grand sourire.

«Bonjour petite sœur!», a dit la belle jeune femme qui est juste entrée. «Tu m'as manqué!», a répondu la petite fille en courant vers la femme avec des bras ouverts. La femme a levé ses yeux au ciel, «Tu es trop mignonne! J'étais juste dehors pour étirer mes jambes pendant une heure. J'ai quelque chose pour toi, je pense que tu l'aimeras beaucoup!» De sa poche la femme a enlevé un petit paquet. La fille l'a saisi et a déchiré le papier. C'était un petit collier avec un pendentif en forme de myosotis. «Pour être harmonisé avec tes yeux», a souri la femme. «Oh, grande sœur! Je l'adore!», a soufflé la fille avec ces mêmes yeux bleus tout ronds. «Bon!», a ri la femme, «Je serai dans ma chambre, si tu a besoin de moi.» «J'attends ici pour nos parents», la fille a répondu.

Elle a embrassée sa sœur encore, mais cette fois elle a remarqué une tache rouge sur le devant de sa chemise. «Oh! Es-tu blessé?!», elle a crié. La jeune femme regarde sa chemise sans souci, «Ce n'est rien. Je suis tombée pendant ma promenade, c'est tout.»

La fille s'est assise par la fenêtre, une heure passait et puis elle a entendu la clé dans la porte. Sa mère et son père sont entrés, la fille souriait, mais le sourire a disparu de son visage quand les policiers sont entrés dans la maison derrière ses parents. Les yeux de sa mère étaient rouges et boursoufflés.

«Maman, qu'est ce qui se passe?», elle avait demandé dans une voix terrifiée. Sa mère a répondu dans une voix obstruée, «C'est ta sœur ma petite... elle a...» La femme a commencé de pleurer hystériquement. «Où est la chambre de ta sœur?», a demandé un des policiers doucement. «Est-ce que tu vas la mettre en arrestation?! Elle n'a rien fait!», sangloté la fille. Mais tout à coup elle s'est rappelée des tâches rouges... «Non! Elle n'a tué personne! Je sais qu'elle n'aurait jamais tué personne!»

Tout le monde l'avait regardé d'une manière étrange. «Ma chère», a dit un policier calmement, «Nous ne sommes pas ici pour arrêter ta sœur. Et... pourquoi est-ce que tu penses qu'elle t'aurait entendu?» «Parce qu'elle est dans sa chambre maintenant,» «a dit la fille d'une manière incrédule, «elle m'a juste parlé il y a une heure.» «Ma fille,» sa mère a dit d'une voix effrayée, «C'est impossible, les policiers ont trouvé ta sœur sur l'autoroute il y a trois heures... elle était assassinée.»

«Oui,» le policier a dit, «On veut que tu essaies d'identifier ça pour nous, c'était dans sa main quand on l'a trouvé» Il a montré une photo d'un beau collier, avec un pendentif de myosotis.

Elle a touché le myosotis sous sa chemise avec une main tremblante, «Non, je ne l'ai jamais vu avant», elle a répondu. La petite fille a marché dans sa chambre pour enlever le collier.

Grades 11-12

The Voyager

*Heather Dunbar
Moscrop Secondary*

Grasped firmly, and withdrawn from your translucent hidey-hole,
Kidnapped from your kin, torn from your friends.

Brought swiftly to the lips of cold metal, now breeched, distending
What torture is this? To be strained beyond all reasoning, to the point of near rapture.

It does not cease, nor does it persist. An incessant, dull, throb.
Bound, then fettered to a wailing conductor, only meant to follow.

Led by a volley of whines, trailing far behind, buffeting the passing air.
Blue sky is all around. You long for it, long to be free. So close, yet so far.

The next gust of wind brings with it a determination so pure,
That you wriggle your shackles, loose, fluttering free from the griping chieftain.

Triumphant at last! Free now to explore! The world is yours!
Go forth! Go forth! The sky is the limit!

But o! Fanciful, wandering brilliance!
How shall you catalogue your divine exploits?

No matter. Observe what there is to observe! Live what there is to live!

Higher, higher you go, there is nothing out of your line of sight.
Higher, higher still.

But soft! What's this? A familiar pain. Distending...
Torture! Torture again! Strained beyond all reasoning, to the point of rupture.

Extinguished. In your prime. At the height of your existence.
Just,
Gone...

The Conversation of Breathing

Alysha Li

Moscrop Secondary

(Inhale.)

My heart springs to my throat,
throbbing,
wrestling.
My throat paralyzes the emotions trapped at
the dam of my lips.
My stomach writhes between my skeleton,
drowning,
wobbling.
My hands move to their own rhythm as I dry
tears like those of a faulty faucet's
(they abandon their map of desperation
on my cheeks.)
I shift forward,
Setting my body in motion to send you away.
Left foot, right foot.
One step, two step.
I see you re-packing.
(I see you leaving.)
You smile,
(I grimace.)
You ask how I'll be,
(I lie.)
I reply, "Don't worry about me."
(But I should be selfish and lock you in my
heart's suitcase, taking you with me to every
place I go.)
I want to say that I'll miss you,
as I'll remind you that I still need your embrace,
your alto laugh interlaced with my soprano,
your shadow swallowing mine.
I want you to know that I'm being consumed
from the inside out,
that my heart is too heavy,
remembering what my mind chooses not to.
I ask how you are,
(hoping, dreaming, wishing that you'll tell me
what I want to hear.)
You reply,
(excluding that you'll miss me,
that you still love me.)

My eyes are like an explorer maneuvering the
contours of your face
(searching for my resemblance in you.)
They lose sight,
(but they see your stacked bags and worn
passport with a ticket peeking out.)
"Attention all passengers boarding flight..."
You dutifully say your good-bye,
before you trot towards the line-up
(without looking back to see if I've moved.)
My tongue steals the words that bridge
meaning to my thoughts,
warping sounds,
stringing together articulations.
One day this will pass,
this pain will enter an intermission,
I'll be able to give you a call,
as we'll converse about chemical equations,
and debate physics in the news.
(I'll ignore my leaping heart.)
You vanish behind the security doors,
when my heart finally leaps past
my Cupid's bow,
as I give its erratic beat wasted volume:
"Stay, Daddy, stay."
(Exhale.)

Wall

Cathy Chen
Burnaby South Secondary

When my paperback fairy tale wall fell
I suffocated.

A crumbling sanity,
Of a crumbling witness,
Enclosed by crumbling walls.

Once my root.
Welding my existence into the earth.
I grew, a bright young seedling
Then
The wind.

I fall down.
We all fall down.
This cycle.
Inexplicable.

Why the bright young seedling,
Dies in its own wake
Pinned down
By its fallen wall.
Unable to grasp at
The unfathomable depths of the azure.

The lies
Of childhood.
The jokes
On morality.

Because walls are paperback fairy tales.

Ode to a Cob of Corn

Carolyn King, Burnaby South Secondary

You would give every man thine ear
But few thy sweetest voice.
To tempt and taunt, your leaves do furl,
And your luscious looks do obey.
To cut your silky tresses down
Is to be cruel only to be kind.
With soft smells and fair stalks,
You have cleft my heart in twain.
If only in your harvest state could
My mind dislike anything,
I would obey.
But your air, eye, and slight of scent
Slightly catch my breath.
Ah, there's the rub,
The butter has fled.

Soul Seeking

Amanda Pion, Burnaby Mountain Secondary

Bright lights and spinning city signs
Luminescent coloured luggage
and big dreams
Hope disguised as street workers
Pacing up and down pavement
Love splashed across young faces
Fingers entwined, vows taken
Wheels turn endlessly without real reason
Floating off to different places,
different locations
Buried beneath tinted glass lay felicity
Hidden among the tiny children
Name tags telling them exactly who they are
Their parent's ideal goals in essence
Endless cloud and deepening sky
Who will you lure next...?
Miles of pavement lay ahead
Emotion colourful as tangy candies
Identify masked and unrecognizable
Still the wheels continuously spin
And time moves forward just as people do
As I struggle trying to find the way...

Sens oublié

Xenia Chiru

Moscrop Secondary

Je garde, je garde mes yeux grands ouverts
Pour voir naître l'univers
Mon univers, a moi de découvrir
Et les énigmes dans mon chemin
Me parlent, me caressent
Et me supplient
Garde, garde tes yeux grands ouverts.

Obscures, les murmures de la vie
Hurlent dans mes oreilles
Mais moi, j'écoute du hiphop
Seulement les arbres les entendent.
Les arbres qui poussent
Comme des mains, comme des serpents,
comme des rayons
Gravent nos histoires dans leur écorce.
Aveugles, insouciantes, on touche
Leur peau
Sans trépidation
On voit les branches,
leur parfum nous heurte
Mais on a oublié comment boire la sève
Et les yeux, on les garde grands fermés.

Carpé Facial Hair

Jonathan van Aggelen

Burnaby Mountain Secondary

A simple patch sits below your lip
Noticeable yet subtle
If this is all you can equip
Your esteem will not shuttle

A full on beard is what you want
Some will think it is a mess
With this, the Prepubescent you'll taunt
It shows that you mean business

On either side there's lots of hair
Hippies made these chops famous
Hearing is made tough with this pair
This vital trend is ageless

A single inch sits below the nose
With this Hitler was succinct
Despite nice hair he had lots of foes
This fad is now extinct

Facial hair is a treasure to keep
Not all are lucky enough
While others are thick as a sheep
All I have is simple fluff.

The Violin's Serenade / The Maiden's Reply

Lena Ji, Burnaby North Secondary

If love can be expressed in song,
Then let this melody belong
To us and those who care to list¹,
For serenades thou ne'er² resist.

Come sing of roses as they bloom,
Whose pedals I will make perfume,
And when the moon climbs high above,
Thou shalt forever be my love.

And I will paint for thee, a world
Of fragrant memories unfurled,
Embroidered with the purest notes,
A different shade each tone promotes.

The moon will always glow upon
Thy comely³ soul, and soon anon⁴.
A most romantic tune shall rise,
Amidst the darkness of the skies.

Let love become my serenade,
A timeless tune that will not fade,
And if this passion may thee move,
Then pray⁵ forever be my love.

The flaming heart's vibrato rings
As clear as icy, crystal springs
So if my passion may thee move,
Then pray forever be my love.

If love could last as long as time,
and ne'er to wither like the thyme⁶,
Then serenades will always sing
Of happiness, which love can bring.

The roses bloom, but wither fast,
No fragrance will forever last,
In faith⁷, the moon may ne'er meet love,
So why must I become the dove?

The painted world will wash away
As tears rain down, for day by day,
The colors fade, and oh, so soon,
Thy strings will be so out of tune.

A moon so bright the clouds must veil,
So dark, strange figures can prevail,
For verily⁸ the night can hide
The sinister and all that's spied.

Thy short-lived love will soon dry out,
A lifeless tune to roam about,
Such languished promises above,
Hence we will ne'er⁴ forever love.

If all thy passion were to last
Beyond eternity, steadfast,
Mayhap I will become a dove
To be forever thy true love.

1. **list**: listen. 2. **ne'er**: never 3. **comely**:
attractive 4. **anon**: later 5. **pray**: please

6. **thyme**: aromatic herb 7. **faith**: truth
8. **verily**: truly

Silence

Eric Xu
Burnaby North Secondary

Silence.
It is the muted pattering of a soft rainfall,
 Growing, gaining,
Distant clouds stem from
 the infant's incense.
The ash plummets
 Ablaze,
And all is silent.

Shadows.
They creep along the frigid
 standstill of a scene,
 Pausing, lurking,
An echo of existence.
Like the fallen crown,
 They are pawns,
 Scribbled by quill.

Silence.
It is the stillness of night,
It is the hovering of chill,
 The bed of a river.

Silence,
Is the orange glow of the lanterns,
 The wolf's tooth.
It is the frail walking up this road,
The drop of a pencil sires an earthquake.
 But in the end,
 Nothing.
All is a silhouette.
All is silent.

l'Étoile Filante

Maggie Clark
Cariboo Hill Secondary

Je vois une étoile brillante
Qui flambe avec une lumière fouguese
Juste de voir sa beauté
me fait sentir contente

Elle danse de loin
La petite étoile filante

Je souhaite et je souhaite,
Quand je vois le bruissement doré
De cette étoile parfaite

Elle danse de loin
La petite étoile filante

Mais, soudainement sa lumière baisse
Juste quand il n'y a rien que le ciel nocturne
Encore mon cœur est joyeux même
si l'étoile me délaisse

A cause du fait
Que mon étoile filante m'aide à sentir
que mon désir va devenir vrai!

Pour une dernière fois

Karim Nahed
Moscrop Secondary

Assise sur sa chaise de bois fragile
Parfaitement sous l'ombre
fraîche du feuillage,
Elle se berçait sereine et tranquille
Et contemplait la merveille du paysage
Lavandes, anémones, tulipes et
marguerites du jardin
Suaient sous la chaleur de l'éclat du soleil
Elles lâchaient dans
l'air un délicieux parfum
Qui tirait la vieille de son dernier sommeil
Au-delà de la verdure paisible et docile
S'étendait une mer aux vagues
danseuses et habiles
L'azur lointain brillait dans les yeux
de la femme
Mais l'inconnu faisait trembler
son corps et son âme.

La brise marine secouait
les feuilles du chêne
Et faisait sursauter la vieille
de temps en temps
Mais elle savait
qu'il ne vaudrait pas la peine
Son heure sonnerait en quelques moments
Au son de la mélodie subtile
des hirondelles,
Un sourire se creusait
dans sa peau froissée
Heureuse et nostalgique,
elle continue à se bercer
Jouissant du paysage avant de quitter.

How to Write a Winning Poem (The Easy Way)

Cathy Chen
Burnaby South Secondary

A spectrum of archaic diction
Doth proclaim a place in this fiction
Tabletop sources –
pen and a ravished dictionary
Thesaurus? 'Tis supplementary
A superficial, emphasized light shine
On such elevated language, the divine
Utilization of fervent affectation
To swallow the judges in your creation
Enough to rouse judicial illusion
Enough to sway the conclusion
Yet remember the preposition
and the conjunction
Are keys to syntactical function
On to emotional charade
It's like going to a masquerade
Pathos, Euphoria, Wrath, and Grace
Conceal an apathetic face
Give no mercy to the reader, no clue
Deluge them with Technicolour spew
Envelope them in opacity
And let them question their capacity
Now for the conclusion
Time to generate more confusion
That one-word stumbler, a final trick
To finalize your poem in quick
Aha,
Ipecacuanha.

The Rose Patch

Adam Glass, Burnaby Mountain Secondary

The imposing wrought iron gates loomed in front of us, keeping the wonderland behind them merely an attraction, like the animals in a zoo. But we had Ben, and he knew where the secret latch was. He disappeared briefly as he knelt by the rusted pole, about level with the lowest hinge. Ben was truly a master of his craft and soon the almost inevitable click resonated around the houses, echoing until it was quickly pierced by the creak of the long un-oiled rusty gates reluctantly swinging open. Now there was just the impudent “No Ball Games on the Grass” sign. Childhood logic, so prevalent at age thirteen, dictated that it was so easily knocked over, therefore wasn’t worth paying attention to.

Our Garden of Eden was nothing more than a hilly mound with unkempt grass, weeds strewn sporadically, except for the sides where Mr. Styles perfectly manicured roses stood proudly as a silent reminder of the dignified history the neighbourhood had. The air was an inviting concoction of heavy set dew, mixed with the fresh flowers, and tinged with the backdrop of looming spruce trees. We had to watch our footing as the dew turned the grass into something more appropriate of an ice rink; though we knew the newly-rising sun would hurriedly change this. The houses seemed so peaceful, basking in the early-morning glow, but we knew this would soon be shattered by the disruptive childhood excitement that is competition.

We lay down our backpacks; twelve split into four equal piles, and arranged them at either end of the grass to create two roughly equal goals. I remember always picking the boy with small feet so he could be used to measure our goal’s length, fourteen footsteps is fourteen footsteps regardless of shoe size. And after brief moments of idle chatter someone would whip out the old leather ball with half of its panels missing and the most intense three hours of our week would commence.

Occasionally, there would be a break in play as the odd passerby feigned monotonous interest with a casual “Hello, how do you do?” But this aside we played as hard and as fast as we could without intermission. Eventually our enthusiasm gave way to parched lips, parched tongues and parched cheeks, constant running and sweating turning every mouth into a desert. And now the real game began: you absolutely never went to get a drink, leaving your team down one man was tantamount to high treason. Commonly, someone on the opposition would catch your eye and you would wander discreetly over to the side together and drink heartily.

Refreshed, I often sprinted back on to the pitch and immediately demanded the ball. Usually just glad for his turn to drink, the person in possession would ping the ball across the increasingly slick surface. I’d only needed two touches: one to steady and one to shoot. A pathetic attempt would bounce left and right as it pin-balled its way to goal off divots and tree stumps. Arguments of handball and rebounds not counting were left behind as I soared towards the edge of the pitch, high-fiving the trees who were now nameless faces in the ecstatic crowd, all eager for their high five, their brush with greatness.

Every celebration ended with the ceremonial knee-slide down the hill, unfortunately straight into Mr. Styles’ rose patch; I often wonder if he ever forgave us. And there you would wait until joined by teammates, and even those on the opposing side. Because that’s what it’s all about: twelve completely different kids brought together by the unifying medium soccer, held together with the bonds of friendship.

The Xargg Guide to Creatures on Earth

Kevin Fan

Moscrop Secondary

Homo sapiens /h'oumou s'æpienz/

Homo sapiens are the only earth species of bipedal primates that express joy in the suffering of their world. These primitive organisms are the only of their kind. No other organism is backwards enough to commit suicide, purposely damage their own bodies, kill others of the same species without reason, intentionally damage their own habitat, or severely disturb the food chain. Their omnivorous diet consists of mainly mutated *mammalia* and modified *plantae*. A large portion of *Homo sapiens* imprudently ingest, inhale, or inject toxins for pleasure.

Homo sapiens plague every continent except Antarctica and have made enemies with nearly every other species on earth with their callous hunting and invading settlements. They are mainly located near bodies of water and vegetation, living in self-made dwellings known as homes. *Homo sapiens* live in groups called families which are much less bonded than a pack of *Canis lupus* or a pod of *Delphinus capensis*: Separations in families are very common and there have been multiple recorded cases of homicide with individuals within the same family.

Homo sapiens are the only species on Earth that are constantly attempting to expunge their own kind. They have been observed murdering, bombing, shooting, fighting, stabbing, electrocuting, hanging, poisoning, strangling, warring with, and nuking others of their species. A massive 10% of all *Homo sapiens* die of unnatural and preventable deaths such as these. The actions of *Homo sapiens* twisted the hospitality of Earth, now well-known for its futile lands. With the introduction of these unthinking and worthless organisms, resources were squandered and *plantae* were abused.

Homo sapiens have some of the feeblest brains of all intelligent species known. Their inability to accept change makes *Homo sapiens* very dangerous to us otherworlders, for they are horrifyingly spontaneous and wild. You should avoid them at all costs.

Backtracking Across Snail Bridge

Rachel Kim

Burnaby North Secondary

Grace and I know about the small, narrow opening in the middle of the hedges opposite the school. Just beyond it is “the Place,” where nothing matters for at least an hour. That’s all we need – enough time to avoid the art teacher’s long, decorative nails, tapping against the desk saying, “Do better.”

We make our escape behind tall, yellowy trees lined up, frozen, along the sides of trails like weary soldiers. Bare. Emaciated. Their spindly branches overlap each other like intertwining fingers-a gauzy veil that hides us well from the outside. The sky is blue-white and glowing fluorescent. The air is crisp and clean; it leaves an aching trail of cold from the inside of my nose to my forehead. I revel in it.

Out here, I am a popped balloon. There’s a gaping hole in my chest and the wind blows and blows and blows through it until finally, there’s no heaviness left that hasn’t been carried away.

“Charlotte left yesterday,” she sighs, “I miss her.”

“Oh, it’s okay,” I sniffle. It’s hard to sound sincere; Charlotte was a giant spider. Just being reminded of her long orange legs and brown-black body dangling beside Grace’s front door...Good riddance, I think.

But I don’t tell her that.

Instead I say “Number two hundred and three: the janitor’s evil glares” continuing our list of things we hate about Korean school.

“Number two hundred and four: the art teacher’s nails, says Grace. We fall into a giggling fit. Grace slings her arm around my shoulders.

We reach the stream sooner than expected. It trickles quietly between twiggy skeletons of bushes. Grace sits down on a log. She rummages through her Mickey Mouse bag, pulls out two granola bars and offers me one. I take it.

“Next time you come over, I’ll show you the giant snail I found,” says Grace.

“Does this have to do with your ‘snails will take over the world’ conspiracy theory?”

“Of course. The snail I found is the overlord.”

I act skeptical, knowing full well the impossibility of koala-riding snail armies, but secretly I wonder if she’s right.

* * *

- continued -

Saturday, we meet in front of the Starbucks by the skytrain. She sits cross-legged on the grey small bench, facing me. I have my feet planted firmly on the ground. It's been some time since we were two small girls shuffling down the sidewalk, nervous about getting caught outside of Korean school, excited over their first taste of truancy, of stolen freedom. Now, conversation starts with "how are you?" and ends with "what about you?" without much of anything in between.

"How's Kevin?" I ask.

"Oh, we broke up."

"That's too bad." I don't have much to say. I don't know Kevin, I've only heard his name once. This time she attempts conversation. "Are you still friends with Jo?"

"No. I haven't talked to her since...grade nine."

"Aw, how come?"

"High school. New friends. We didn't actually have much in common."

She hums in understanding. We're caught in a silence filled with one-sided gossip and disconnected social networks and a brilliant neon sign that reads:

THE ROAD WAS FORKED,
LET'S MEET AT THE DIVIDE.

"The snail was cut down last week."

Finally I know what she's talking about. "You mean that tree by the playground?"

"Yeah. The overlord."

I chuckle – awkward, nostalgic, relieved. "I guess your invasion theory fell through, huh?"

"Oh well," she says, flippantly, smiling, "It could still happen. They'll be back."

"Yeah," I shrug, Maybe."

* * *

In total, we make plans to visit "the Place" five times.

We never do go back.

La Réalité de Mes Sensations

Aditi Shah

Moscrop Secondary

La première chose que je me sens, ce sont mes vieilles sandales attachées un peu trop serrées sur mes pieds. Le cuir est usé mais doux en-dessous de mes talons. Je remue mes orteils; c'est très confortable. Je tends mes bras et je me tourne. Les bouts de mes doigts touchent les murs rêches et je réalise que je suis dans une ruelle quelque part près de ma maison. Une petite brise fait danser mes cheveux et ils retombent sur mon visage, irritée, je pousse ma frange en arrière de mon oreille. Je me retourne, le dos contre le vent, et je commence à marcher.

La première chose que j'entends, c'est le rire fort et joyeux d'un enfant qui retentit dans les ruelles. Il y a des pas qui courent rapidement et on entend les souliers qui touchent la terre d'un rythme régulier. Après un instant, j'entends d'autres pas qui courent en me suivant. Dans la distance, il y a une sonnerie qui sonne et quelqu'un répond. En arrière de moi, un homme crie dans sa voix caverneuse et timbrée de venir acheter le quotidien. Je continue à marcher.

La première chose que je sens, c'est l'arôme de la nourriture épicée qui flotte en-dessous de mon nez. Si je me concentre fort, je pourrais presque le goûter sur ma langue. Un rickshaw se faufile dans la rue pas loin d'où je marche et l'arôme de la bouffe est rapidement remplacé par l'odeur du gaz. Ça sent fort et mes yeux brûlent. J'éternue et je continue à marcher.

La première chose que je vois quand j'ouvre mes yeux, c'est ma chambre. Elle est exactement la même; rien n'a changé. D'un côté, je vois mon pupitre, il est couvert de cahiers, de devoirs, de livres et même de quelques papiers de bonbons. Devant moi, je vois la réflexion du soleil dans le miroir et, en dessous, ma petite boîte à bijoux qui est cachée sous mon foulard que j'ai enlevé hier soir, après être retournée à la maison. La porte de ma garde-robe est à demi-ouverte et je peux voir au fond quelques vêtements dont aucun n'est plié.

Je cligne mes yeux en espérant que l'image devant moi changera et s'accordera avec toutes les autres sensations que j'ai éprouvées. Cela prend un moment avant que je comprenne que c'était tout dans mon imagination et que tout n'était rien qu'un rêve. Je souris, mais ce n'est pas la joie qui est dans mes yeux. C'est une sensation aigre-douce parce qu'à ce moment, je suis revenue à la réalité. Je ne joue pas en Inde dans les ruelles de mon enfance avec mes amies, mais je me réveille plutôt dans mon lit dans ma maison à Vancouver. Mon réveil-matin continu à sonner. C'est un nouveau jour dans ma nouvelle vie. Je me lève et je commence ma journée.

Digging to China

Yvette Rancourt

Burnaby Mountain Secondary

I convinced my sister and neighbour to dig a hole to China. I was six, and they were four and five respectively. The day was warm, with little breezes scurrying across the dry grass, and I had already determined the site of the dig. Under the giant tree in our backyard would be perfect – an abundance of loose dirt would reduce the amount of work required and the shed would shield us from prying eyes. I didn't want any parents interrupting my Top Secret Operation.

Young workers assembled, I outfitted them with the necessary tools (hardy plastic spades and buckets that had previously seen action in the great Sandcastle Campaign) and explained our mission. It was simple. They were to dig under the tree until they got to China.

Of course, I assured them, it would be super cool when they got there. It would be a wonderful, adventure like in Indiana Jones. They could amaze their friends and astound their relatives with tales of their exploits – there might even be zombies. Plus, I'd get them some lemonade if they got thirsty. As they gazed up at me with their little round faces, eyes glowing with trust, I felt a wave of benevolence sweep over me.

You can take breaks if you get tired, I added, feeling quite magnanimous. But no slacking off; if you want to get to China you have to dig.

Hey, these kids needed someone to keep them on track.

Like baby bears they toddled off to do my bidding. I was quite pleased at my mental comparison, and took it as yet another sign of my advanced intellect. Now it was time for the real mission.

While the young uns were distracted, I absconded with the Hot Wheels. As they were occupied with other matters, I was certain that I would be able to play undisturbed. I watched them from the patio – the mini shovels had made swift work, they were now nearly half a foot below the ground. They laughed and threw clumps of dirt. Chuckling to myself, I calmly pushed the little cars around. In my infinite wisdom, I knew they were fools on an errand. Of course they could never dig to China. Digging straight down from our location, they'd end up in Australia for sure. Everyone knew that.

Next

Victoria Lei

Burnaby South Secondary

"Next!" I snapped, grinding out the butt of my cigarette on the tray. Carefully, I adjusted my lens to focus on my newest customer, a pretty little miss with a yard of yellow hair. I took the three required shots, front-side-side, while she obeyed solemnly, knowing as all the people who ended up here knew, that nothing they said mattered anymore. Only when I picked up the other camera did she start and speak,

"Is that the new one? The one everyone is so troubled by?"

I chuckled. "Only those wi' secrets are troubled wi' this baby here. She's not like them regular ones, you know. The pictures she takes shows everything other pictures don't show."

"Oh?"

I bent down and zoomed in on her face.

"Yep, if I took a picture of a thief, what'd probably show up would be money or-or jewels or somethin'."

"And a serial killer?"

"Well...this is supposed to show what you're hiding in your heart, so I guess it'd either be the poor guy they just bumped off or the next..." I trailed off as I saw her eyes. They'd been black as pitch and distant when she'd entered, but now gleamed with an almost fanatical light. I shivered and hunched my shoulders under her gaze, pressing down on the button which released a satisfying click.

"Thank you."

I looked up but didn't meet her eyes. What delicate white hands she had...Relief diffused through me when the warden opened the door to let her out and she once again resumed the role of a resigned captive.

"So, what's it this time?" asked the warden as the photo whirled out of the camera.

I glanced at the picture and almost dropped the camera. Looking back at me was myself.

The Raconteur

Marina Ren

Burnaby North Secondary

Sunlight streams in from the skylight above, showering her father in light as he steps onto the creaking hardwood floor of her bedroom. He sees her toss aside a collection of Brahms's sheet music as she packs up her clothes, her books, her childhood.

"Why don't you play a song?" he smiles at her, the corners of his eyes crinkling, "One last song, before you leave."

She watches her father carefully, taking in his wrinkled clothing, his bare feet, his shaking hands. She stands up, covers her father's coarse hands with hers, and smiles slightly.

She makes her way to the piano resting in the cluttered den, its old bench sighing as she sits down. Curling her toes around the pedals of the piano, she dampens and amplifies in turn as she hesitantly plays a scale. Finding that the ivory keys give way easily to her fingers, she begins to spin a web of notes, an octave above middle C.

"Ring around the rosie, a pocketful of posies: ashes, ashes! We all fall down," she chants.

She remembers how her mother took her hands and spun her around once, twice, before collapsing in laughter.

"What are we singing about, mommy?" she had asked curiously.

Her mother patted her head, "Something that happens to us all eventually. Live each day like you have forever, but live each day like it'll be your last.

She stops her thoughts, instead focusing on a blur of eyes, a curve of a smile, a wisp of auburn hair. Her fingers transition into another melody.

"Mary had a little lamb," she sings haltingly, "Its fleece as white as snow."

She remembers the crunch of the snow under her boots, her footsteps mapped on a canvas of white. She looked out her window the next day, finding that a new layer of snow had covered every trace of her existence. She had asked, "Where did I go?"

"You didn't go anywhere, silly," her mother smiled. "You're still there, only hidden underneath. And as long as we know that you're there, you won't go anywhere."

Her hands slide down an octave to middle C.

"Twinkle, twinkle little star," she whispers softly. "How I wonder where you are."

Where did I go? She remembers that dream. In that dream, it was her mother who asked, "Where did I go?"

"Where did mommy go?"

- continued -

Her father told her, “Mommy went up to the sky to catch a star for you. She caught a shooting star, but it took her and sailed off. Now mommy’s lost, and she can’t find her way back home anymore. But we know she’s there, right? It’ll be our little secret.” He winked conspiratorially, but his eyebrows furrowed.

That was the last time she asked a question out of curiosity.

The black and white keys of the piano coalesce as her fingers deftly sweep across the keys into her last song.

Hush little baby, don’t you cry,” her voice wobbles, “Daddy loves you and so do I.”

She finishes her story with one last cadence. Looking down at her piano, passed down from grandmother to mother, from mother to daughter, she touches the keys.

She hears the notes her mother used to spin, her stories of laughter and warmth.

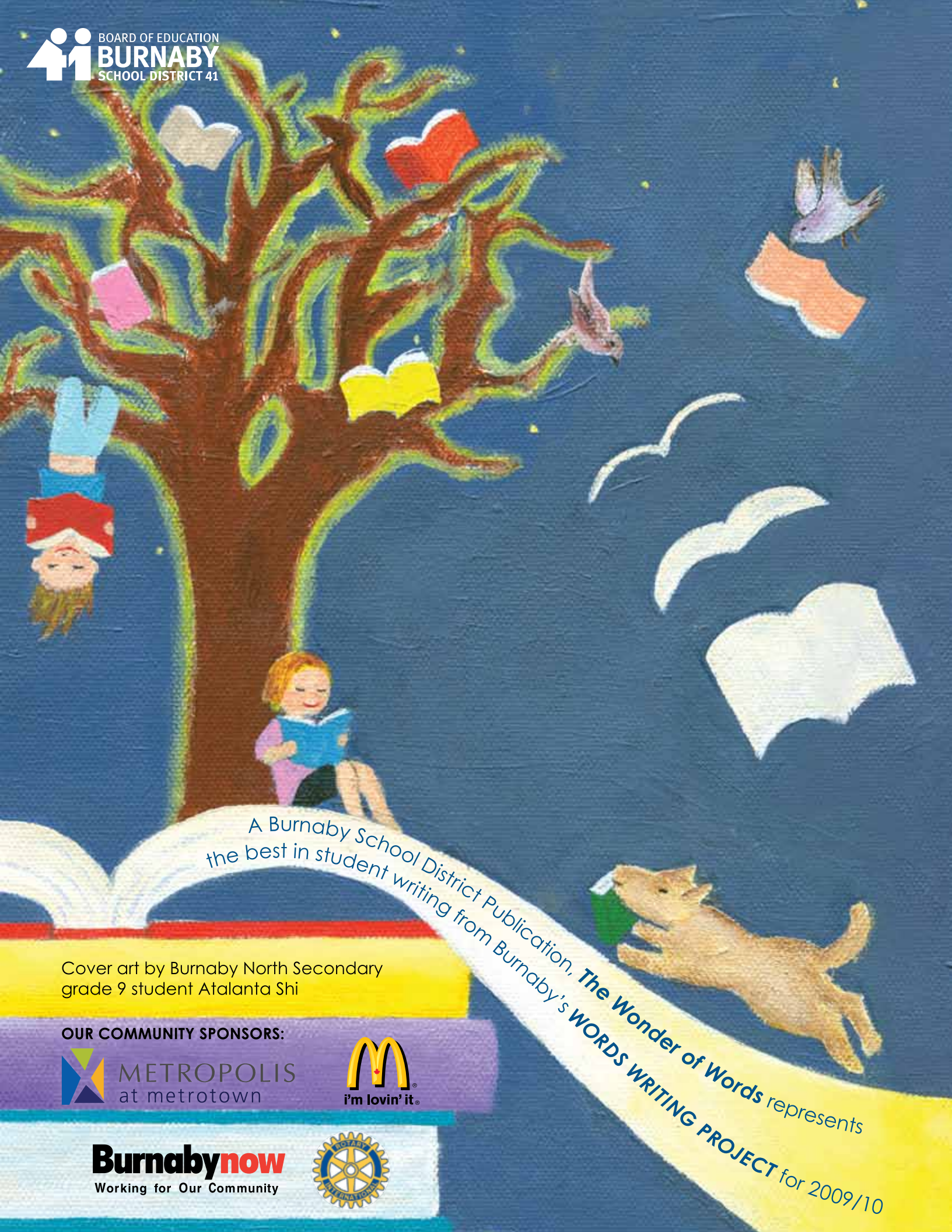
Her father appraises her, “It’s about time, isn’t it? The years pass me by. You’re already eighteen, and about to let go.”

She shuts the piano cover, watches the dust fly up into the air.

“Don’t forget your stories now.”

“Of course not,” she turns to him, smiling, “I won’t forget.”

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