



# A Hand Full of Words

2013/14 ANTHOLOGY

*"The hand imagery I've used on the cover illustrates that hands do a lot of things. Whether you are an artist, a musician, or a writer - hands are precious. And the work that is produced by our hands can create powerful messages, thought provoking images and stir a person's feelings."*

~ Cover art by Ivy Chu  
Grade 10, Byrne Creek Secondary

## A Message from the Board of Education

Literacy is the foundation for all learning. Unique to Burnaby, the WORDS Writing Project is testimony to the fact that in Burnaby Schools, literacy is a priority, at any age.

For 28 years, the WORDS Writing Project has encouraged Burnaby students, from kindergarten to grade 12, and adult learners from the District's Literacy Foundations Program, to express themselves through the power of words. The growth and continued success of this writing project is a direct reflection of the dedicated teachers who nurture the writing talents of their students, supportive parents who encourage their child to do their very best, and generous community sponsors who are committed to supporting youth and literacy.

We are proud to present you with "A Hand Full of Words," this year's limited edition anthology of poetry and prose. It features a collection of 92 selected works by the best student writers in the District. Each of them has used their hands to pick up their pen or pencil or to type, and capture their thoughts onto paper. We've taken it one step further, by publishing this anthology, so it can be preserved and enjoyed by others.

This anthology is full of words worth sharing, and we encourage you to "hand" it to a friend or colleague when you are done reading. It is just one of so many reasons we are proud of our Burnaby Schools.



Baljinder  
Narang  
Chair



Ron  
Burton  
Vice-Chair



Meiling  
Chia



Larry  
Hayes



Harman  
Pandher



James  
Wang



Gary  
Wong



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**BURNABY**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT 41

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**WORDS WRITING PROJECT  
2013/14 ANTHOLOGY**

**A Hand Full of Words**



This is an anthology of selected works by students from K to 12 and adults.  
Please review content to ensure it is appropriate for your child.

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 are the actual author of the piece that they have submitted

While every effort is made to showcase student work as true to the original form as possible, variations may have occurred during the layout process.

## WORDS WRITING PROJECT

### 2013/14 ANTHOLOGY - A Hand Full of Words

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Burnaby School District's **WORDS WRITING PROJECT** provides students from kindergarten to grade 12 and adult learners from the District's Literacy Foundations Program – an opportunity to become published authors. We are pleased to recognize the following students whose submissions were selected for publication in the **2013/14 WORDS ANTHOLOGY, A Hand Full of Words**.

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# 2013/14 ANTHOLOGY

## A Hand Full of Words

### Ages 5-7

#### When My Sister Laughs

*Ziya Merchant*  
*Marlborough Elementary*

When my sister laughs,  
It sounds as if an angel is singing.  
When my sister laughs,  
It is like hearing  
the fluttering of a butterfly's wings.  
When my sister laughs,  
It is like the rainbow appearing in the sky.  
When my sister laughs,  
It seems as if flowers are blooming.  
When my sister laughs,  
I feel happy!

#### Peace

*Brandon Wong*  
*Nelson Elementary*

Peace is quiet  
Peace feels like the sun and air.  
Peace sounds like no talking.  
Peace is awesome.  
Peace is you.

#### Two-Word Poem

*Adam Chen*  
*Buckingham Elementary*

Flowing water  
Silent stream  
Avoiding predators  
Finding darkness.  
  
Growing body  
Flicking tail  
Wiggling free  
Celebrating freedom!

#### Le grand bonhomme de neige

*Sebastian Lopez*  
*École Sperling Élémentaire*

Un jour en hiver j'ai fait un très grand bonhomme de neige. Le bonhomme que j'ai fait avec mes amis était très excité parce qu'il peut jouer avec ses amis à lancer les boules de neige.

Le lendemain le soleil apparaît et le bonhomme de neige a fondu.

Le prochain jour le bonhomme de neige était confus. Il ne savait pas qu'est-ce qui va se passer.

« Tu as fondu. Je vais te faire encore le prochain hiver. »



## La gentillesse de l'amitié

*Claire Guo, École Sperling Élémentaire*

L'amitié est qu'est-ce qu'on veut dans ce beau monde. L'amitié est très importante pour mes amis et moi.

L'amitié est quand on pense à nos amis pour dire qu'on les aime. C'est quand une pensée pousse dans notre cœur.

J'ai une amie qui est honnête. Elle est honnête parce qu'elle dit les vrais choses qu'elle a fait. Elle est importante parce qu'elle est mon amie. Elle m'aime parce que je partage mes belles choses et je l'aide quand elle pleure ou tombe. Elle n'a pas peur avec moi. C'est moi qui est son ami préférée.

Ensemble nous adorons regarder les films, mais juste les bons films. Elle aime aussi faire de bons voyages autour du monde. On aime échanger nos beaux vêtements. On aime faire les soirées pyjamas sur nos beaux lits.

J'adore mon amie car elle montre beaucoup de gentillesse et parce qu'elle m'a beaucoup aidé quand j'étais malade et quand j'ai pleuré. Si tu veux une bonne amie comme moi, tu dois être une bonne amie. J'aime beaucoup mes amies!

## The Battle of the Olympic Mascots

*Abby Kelcec, Armstrong Elementary*

Once there were three Olympic mascots, MucMuc, Miga and Zumi. They were opening their cabin door and all of a sudden three new Olympics mascots, Smiley, BunBun and Pups, were in their cabin! So both of the three's decided to compete in the Olympics. Whoever won got the cabin as the prize. The Olympics began! **First**, MucMuc and BunBun competed. They did a race for one mile! **Second**, Miga and Smiley competed in a battle of hockey. **Third**, Zumi and Pups competed by going five times around the room doing all the gymnastics they could. Zumi got victory in the gymnastics competition. In the end, the winners of the Battle of the Olympic Mascots were the old Olympic Mascots, MucMuc, Miga and Zumi!

## Ages 8-10

### Darkness

*Emily Ma, Brentwood Park Elementary*

A soft glow coming  
From the candle  
Has been blown out,  
Soothing our tired  
Eyes with the soft  
Blanket of darkness,  
So different from  
The harsh bright lights of  
The day.

We are all the  
Same when it is dark.  
No one will  
Judge us based on  
Our skin colour,  
Our clothing,  
Whether we are rich or poor,  
Big or small,  
Black or white,  
No one knows the difference  
When we turn off the light.

## **L'Art**

*Marie Spencer*  
*École Sperling Élémentaire*

L'Art est beau comme il est!  
L'art est amusant  
Tu peut utiliser les couleurs  
comme le fond de l'océan  
Et les couleurs comme les nuages et le ciel,  
Le rouge du désert peut être une couleur.  
L'art peut prendre du temps.  
L'art peut être rapide.  
L'art est amusant,  
Pour tout le monde.  
L'art ne doit pas être un dessin,  
Il peut être presque tout  
L'Art de l'écriture...  
L'Art du dessin...  
L'Art de la musique...

## **Sunset Paradise**

*Rachelle Chen*  
*Chaffey-Burke Elementary*

A glowing ball of fire blazing gracefully,  
second by second it sinks inch by inch.  
  
Brilliant calming colours  
create an illusion of paradise.  
The feeling of freedom,  
running along a magnificent beach heaven,  
it disappears  
into the beautiful deep blue tropical ocean.  
  
A shadow of darkness,  
sleeping under the sparkling stars,  
stars like diamonds never to be broken.  
  
Dreaming under diamonds,  
waking to the glorious sunrise.

## **The Meadow**

*Lili Bentley*  
*Clinton Elementary*

Gentle swaying,  
Silver-gold grasses flow,  
Like a discolored ocean waving.  
Small, trickling streams meander,  
Rippling, peaceful meadow.  
Camouflaged birds hiding expertly,  
Let out a clear, high, unwavering trill.  
Quiet, rhythmic slithering stream,  
Overlapping sound of rustling grasses.  
Bright flowers scatter the golden field,  
Daisies with fading pink edges,  
Purple, frilly blossoms,  
Light blue lilies.  
Watery, dark yellow beams of sun,  
Down from their gray prison in the thick clouds.  
Graceful, never-ending background,  
Soft rose-pink cherry blossoms,  
Lush, emerald, dark green pines,  
Calm, rich nature,  
Alive, swishing meadow,  
Soothing.

## **I am inquisitive and determined**

*Vanessa Scrimini*  
*Aubrey Elementary*

I am inquisitive and determined  
I wonder what life means  
I hear the wind whispering my name  
I see the mist dancing in the air  
I want to know all the wonders of the world  
I am inquisitive and determined  
  
I pretend to be the leader of the world  
I feel the flames screaming out to me  
help help help. . . .  
I touch the blades of glass  
I worry how the earth will be in five generations  
I cry how can I help  
I am inquisitive and determined  
  
I understand that I need to work for what I want  
I say we can do whatever we set our minds to do  
I dream of a world without hunger  
I try to do the best at everything I do  
I hope there is kindness and hope for all  
I am inquisitive and determined

## Les chasseurs de cinéma

*Patrick Handra*

*École Marlborough Élémentaire*

Toc! Toc! Toc!  
 Qui est là?  
 Une souris chassée par un chat!  
 Je suis un peu effrayée.  
 Parce qu'il veut me manger!  
 Entre! Entre! S'il te plaît!  
 Et je vais te protéger.

Toc! Toc! Toc!  
 Qui est là?  
 Je suis un vieux chat!  
 Qui est chassé par un chien.  
 Ça, ce n'est pas bien.  
 Laisse-moi entrer, s'il te plaît!  
 J'ai faim et je suis fatigué.  
 Donne-moi un peu de lait!

Toc! Toc! Toc!  
 Qui est là?  
 Est-ce que tu as vu le chat?  
 Oui! Oui! Mais pourquoi?  
 Parce qu'on doit aller au cinéma,  
 Le chat, la souris et moi!  
 Dit le chien en riant.  
 Comment savoir si c'est vrai?  
 Tiens, voici les billets!

## A Poppy

*Abby White*

*Parkcrest Elementary*

Today gun shots can be heard  
 Today soldiers run by me  
 shaking the ground  
 Today my red petals face the smoky air  
 I grow on blood stained land  
 Today soldiers will fight for peace  
 And I still help all people remember

## To My Dear Sister

*(with thanks to the wisdom of e.e. cummings)*

*Emily Ma, Brentwood Park Elementary*

In a moonlit meadow, we play (my only)  
 The swishing of the river stars (shine)  
 I fear none of the world  
 (for you are all the world to me)  
 With the reflection of you (in me)  
 In our eyes (with enchantment I gaze)  
 Within the depth (the wisdom, the true)  
 Is the deepest secret  
 (that no one knows but she)  
 Inside of her heart  
 (cleverly hidden from mankind's greed)  
 Is the wonder (the magic)  
 Of the universe (that is keeping your soul from mine)  
 And when the world slows down (for her)  
 To understand (my love)  
 We merge (finally)  
 Forever (at last)  
 In harmony (in harmony)

## The Raindrop Road

*Alice Zhao*

*Marlborough Elementary*

When they looked outside the window  
 They saw a raindrop landing  
 It settled on the landscape  
 Melting aqua never seemed so divine  
 The raindrop blended with the others in the pond  
 A boot splashed in  
 Every raindrop slid down the mud once more  
 They unified to form the raindrop road

## The Myth about Santa

*Brian Zhang, Taylor Park Elementary*

"Is Santa Claus real?" Your kids might ask you  
 But if you, the parent, hasn't a clue,  
 Then I'll tell you the truth. He just couldn't exist!  
 A piece of this puzzle just doesn't quite fit.  
 First of all, Santa is so very fat,  
 If he jumped down the chimney,  
 he'd wake up the cat!  
 Reindeer can't fly. There's just no way at all;  
 If they even tried, they would jump, spin, and fall

And doesn't he give to the rich and the poor?  
 Yet in poor countries, children can't wish anymore.  
 And just how does Santa travel so quick?  
 It's around the world in 1 night  
 with "Jolly Saint Nick".  
 Of course, there are more. See if you find one too!  
 But if one mentions Santa, say  
 "That just can't be true!"

## Technologie du future

*Alex Hong, École Marlborough Élémentaire*

Ma maman a dit que, dans les vieux jours, il n'y avait pas de Youtube, de courriel, ou d'Internet. Ma maman a eu son premier ordinateur personnel quand elle avait vingt-cinq ans. Moi, j'ai eu mon ordinateur quand j'avais deux ans. La technologie change rapidement.

J'aimerais pouvoir voir des choses différentes dans le futur. Premièrement, je voudrais voir une voiture que je peux conduire sur la route, flotter sur l'eau et voler dans le ciel. Deuxièmement, je voudrais avoir un robot qui fait mes devoirs et mes travaux de maison comme nettoyer le linge et cuisiner. Finalement, je voudrais aller sur Mars pour voir la terre rouge, et la lune pour pouvoir voir la terre de celle-ci.

Mais, je ne veux pas qu'elle change comme l'amour de mes parents et m'amuser avec mes amis.  
 Vive le futur et la technologie!

## Pourquoi il y a la pluie

*Joyce Cao, École Marlborough Élémentaire*

Il y a longtemps passé dans le ciel. Un nuage et Zeus étaient de bons amis. Chaque jour ils jouaient ensemble jour et nuit. Une fois, ils jouaient tellement qu'ils ont joué pendant 24 heures! Chaque matin, ils exploraient la planète. Mais quelques fois, ils se chicanent.

Un jour, Zeus et nuage se disputaient parce que Zeus voulait aller à la gauche mais, nuage voulait aller à la droite. Ils se sont chicanés beaucoup et ils ont décidé de ne plus être amis. Le nuage était tellement fâché qu'il a décidé de voler des poils de sa barbe. Quand nuage a tiré sur sa barbe, Zeus était en colère et il a puni nuage. Il lui a dit de ne pas venir à sa maison pour le reste de sa vie! Le nuage a pleuré et il a dit à tous ses cousins. (Ce sont tous les autres nuages.) Ils ont pleuré beaucoup.

Ça c'est pourquoi il y a de la pluie. Si le nuage vole quelque chose de Zeus, Zeus le punit et si Zeus est très en colère, les nuages pleurent beaucoup. Si Zeus ne punit pas les nuages, parce qu'il est juste fâché, il nuage va juste flotter. Il ne va pas pleurer. C'est pour ça qu'il y a la pluie.

## The Crows

*Lili Bentley, Clinton Elementary*

There are many midnight black crows in the park, washed in blood red light, circling calmly above. These black-winged mysteries do not stop peacefully flying until every twinkling, bright star is out, and the golden moon is high in the dark sky. It seems like all the naturally beautiful birds are one, for they are gracefully flying in one huge, black mass, not leaving anyone behind. They are like a swirling whirlpool up above. Caw, caw! Their polished beaks let out gentle, faint sounds. This flawless song seems to go on forever, mesmerizing and solemn. Sometimes it seems like a magnificent dance, though they do not energetically prance. The softly illuminated crows dive and grandly swing. At other times, they seem to make interesting shapes in the glowing sky, such as a rippling silhouette of a leopard, a slithering snake, or a dark flower bending in the gentle breeze. Each small, beating heart up there is full of beauty and love.

## **Goldilocks and the Three Bears and The Three Policemen Who Weren't Really Policemen – A Fractured Fairy Tale**

*Hannah Limbo, Stoney Creek Community School*

Once upon a time there was a girl named Goldilocks. She was 21, just out of her teens and she was very beautiful and popular with long blonde hair. She was also a bit vain. She lived in a cottage in the woods and everyone knew who she was because she always wore red, blue and green dresses and she rode a horse everywhere she went.

One day she went looking for (and found) a pot of gold because she felt like making jewelry for the whole town. She went home and was just about to start making jewelry when she heard a siren. She quickly peeked out the window and saw the police! She realized that the police probably saw her taking the pot of gold and thought she was a thief!

"Hands in the air!" a cop shouted. "Wait, you don't understand," said Goldilocks, but she wasn't prepared to stick around and try to explain. She had a tunnel that led to a secret room where she'd stuffed the gold. Goldilocks did not think she was a thief because she found the pot of gold. Still, she was super sad that people thought she was.

What Goldilocks didn't know was that the police weren't the police. They were the Three Bears in disguise who were trying to get back at her for eating their porridge.

Goldilocks went to her secret room and then figured out just who the police were – because she had a security camera! "Oh those Bears," she said. She called her friends, the Three Little Pigs, who came right over and ate up the Three Bears. Pigs, after all, eat anything.

And they tasted just right!

## **A Life on Wing**

*David Choo, Lakeview Elementary*

A fat grey ground squirrel scampered over a crackling patch of oak leaves in the high Rockies, and took shelter under a fallen pine.

The whole forest tensed as an adolescent golden eagle, or *Aquila Chrysaetos*, circled overhead in the powerful thermal winds.

A sharp tailed grouse waddled into a clearing surrounded by maple and ash trees. It fell within the five kilometre view radius of the eagle, a three year old whose pinfeathers had dropped only last month, to be replaced with shimmering golden and brown adolescent plumage.

With masterfully quick movements, the largest bird of prey in North America folded in his wings and rocketed downwards, his eye muscles adjusting the very shape of the eye to maintain focus and perception, striking the grouse at the speed of one hundred forty five kilometres per hour, twice the speed of a rifle bullet.

The raptor covered the kill with his wings, as the sky was full of thieves. It picked apart the carcass, ate its fill, spread its wings and flew upward.

The sun was setting, and he headed back to his perch on a steep granite ravine, where a gurgling brook trickled hundreds of meters below. The eagle ruffled his thousands of feathers, tucked his head under his wing and fell asleep.

The next morning the apex predator spread its mighty wings, and headed toward the lake, knowing it was heavily populated by waterfowl at this time of year.

Scanning the scene with eyes that have eight times the strength of a human retina, he spied a large mallard and plunged down.

With extended talons, he hoisted his prize easily, with strength that could allow him to lift three times his weight.

A strange black haze darkened the sun's light. The eagle rotated his head two hundred seventy degrees to see smoke rising from his forest. Titanic orange and yellow flames leapt into the air, and reflected in the eyes of the raptor. A fiery inferno is no home for an eagle which craves solitude, and so the predator soared upward utilizing his seven foot wingspan.

Flying on through the day, not daring to pause in the range of the wildfire, his keen eyes spotted a tree that would work as a perch. He awoke later to a sudden slash to his back, and looked around angrily. He saw a great horned owl circling overhead, probably defending its nest.

A gleam of malice leapt into the raptor's eyes. The eagle screamed a mighty cry and shot into the sky at an astonishingly fast speed, hammering into the owl and sending it spiralling. He swerved upward, and with a screech, announced to the world that he was the king of the skies, and would be for many years to come.

This majestic wild and free animal, a protected species that once stood on the fists of emperors, arced gracefully and rose to the sun's light.

## **The Tree That Ate My Homework**      *Simran Vig, Seaforth Elementary*

I was in the park trying to find the perfect tree to lean against to do my homework. I looked around. Pine tree? No, too slippery. Maple tree? Too rough. Ooh! That's a good one. The Awesome Oak.

I ran over to the tree, sat down and got out my math homework. Suddenly, I heard a sound: "Gobble gobble." There were pieces of bark where my math used to be. I turned around and the tree was smacking its lips. I knew at that moment that the Awesome Oak had eaten my homework. What would I do? I couldn't jump up and scream, "Help! An oak tree ate my homework!" Because that would just sound crazy. So I ran home and tried to forget about it. But how could I forget about a tree that ate my homework?

The next morning my first class was math with Mr. Sullivan. *Sullivan is never going to believe me!* I thought. *He is the meanest teacher in the school.*

I walked into the classroom. "Steven," Mr. Sullivan said. "Where is your homework?" "The Awesome Oak in the park ate it yesterday," I replied. It looked like Mr. Sullivan's head was going to pop off.

"Well, in that case," he said in a calm but stern voice. "I have something special for you." He handed me a bunch of textbooks and said, "Replacement homework! Due tomorrow morning!"

After school, I got my mom's camera and went to the park because I was going to prove the tree ate my homework. I got the camera ready and tossed my homework to the tree. "Gobble gobble." The tree devoured it and I took a photo. But when I looked at the photo all I saw was my big fat thumb covering the lens.

"Nooooooooo!" I yelled. The Awesome Oak had struck again!

When I tried to explain what happened to Mr. Sullivan the next morning, smoke started coming out of his ears. His head was so hot I could have roasted marshmallows! But all I got from him was an even bigger pile of homework than the day before. "Steven, if a tree truly ate your homework, I'll move to Africa," he said.

After school, I brought my friend Gary to the park to be a witness. We walked over to the Awesome Oak.

"Watch closely Gary, I said, holding out my homework. "Gobble gobble." As usual, the tree ate my homework.

"Did you see that?" I said turning around. But Gary was running to an ice cream truck that just happened to come by. "Nooooooooo!" I yelled, again.

The next day, a furious Mr. Sullivan gave me a note to take home. After school Mr. Sullivan got homework from the principal and headed for the park. He decided to lean against an awesome looking oak tree. He took out his work, but just then he heard, "Gobble gobble."

"Have an awesome time in Africa, Mr. Sullivan!" I shouted.

# Ages 11+

## If It Were All Up To Me

*Mackenzie Pereira, Aubrey Elementary*

Where the sun sets behind rolling hills  
 Where the lake is frozen through the night  
 Where fields are lined with daffodils  
 Where there's ever fading light  
 This is where my place would be  
     If it were all up to me  
     Only peace and diversity  
     As I gaze at nature's gift  
     Only respect and equality  
 While the winds blow soft and swift  
 This is what the world would be  
     If it were all up to me

When the moon shines behind the big oak tree  
     When the air is crisp and cool  
 When the animals run wild and free  
 When the frogs croak by the pool  
 This is when my place would be  
     If it were all up to me  
     I like it here  
     On the Earth  
 Where lives the things I love and fear  
 Where fire crackles in the hearth  
 This where I'd stay and see  
     What it has to offer me  
     If it were all up to me

## Rocking Chair

*Alex Mooney, Buckingham Elementary*

The rocking chair sits in the dark corner.  
 Cobwebs creep over its rough surface,  
 hiding the blue color beneath.  
 Dust sits still on the ancient wood,  
 settled there five years ago.  
 It was his chair that sits before me,  
 His chair whose wood  
 creaks and cracks over time.  
 Looking at the chair is too much,  
 dripping lemon in the festering wound.  
 The memories come flooding back,  
 his laugh, his smile, his-*Stop it!* I think.  
 It's just a chair.  
 The rocking chair is gone now,  
 Along with his old house.  
 I get up, put on my coat,  
 and the last piece of my grandfather  
 disappears from my life.

## Peace Poem

*Karen Lin, South Slope Elementary*

Peace is in the trees  
 The way they move when the wind blows  
     Peace is in homes  
 When you have your loved ones around you  
     Peace is in hearts  
 When you love someone more than yourself  
     Peace is in the war zones  
 The way a soldier smiles for the last time before  
     losing everything  
     Peace is in laughter  
 The way a child's smile can affect the world  
     Let your smile change the world  
     Don't let the world change your smile

## The Park Bench

*Troy Chong, Parkcrest Elementary*

At the midst of sunrise on a spring day,  
the park bursts into life.  
Laughing kids join in with frisbees in hand.  
Dogs chase balls with excitement on open grass.  
The atmosphere is full of life  
just as I have always known.  
I am a park bench and this is my home.  
  
As an old woman sits on me,  
she pulls out a bag of bread crumbs,  
tossing it to the hungry pigeons.  
After they leave,  
I sigh as they have left their mark on me.  
I am a park bench and this is my home.

When nightfall rolls in,  
the moon shines brilliantly  
A grimy, homeless man  
shudders on my wooden frame.  
Cigarette butts litter the grounds,  
and blow away in the eerie, windy night.  
I am a park bench and this is my home.

Through the change of seasons,  
I feel the chill of the cold, November rain.  
Fallen wet leaves cling tightly onto me.  
Squirrels that once scurried around my exterior,  
now seek shelter in the trees.  
I am a park bench and this is my home.

As temperatures dip further,  
Soft snowflakes of all sizes fall gracefully.  
I am soon covered in winter white,  
and icicles hang from my seat.  
The atmosphere is peaceful and serene.  
I am a park bench, and I have seen it all.

## I am From

*Tyrel O'Hearn*

*Brentwood Park Elementary*

I am from  
High hopes to  
Low let downs  
Visits to penitentiaries  
Moncton, Dorchester and Renewals  
I am from terror  
Scarred for life  
Watching as he pours his life down the drain  
Drugs for feeling  
Craving the sharp pinch  
High buzz for the taker  
I am from  
Needing him  
To having her  
Wanting him  
But getting her  
The walls that separate me from him  
Far **too thick**

I am from moral poverty  
Loud nights filled with tears  
Arguments because of his addiction  
Leading to more tears and  
Holes in the wall  
Physical  
Emotional  
I am from a dying grandfather  
Who can't stop fighting  
With prayers of sorrow  
Waiting for healing  
Trying to avoid the heavy thought  
I am from a life full of pain  
All for one purpose  
To make me stronger  
To prepare for the real world  
Outside the protection of these walls



## Following Butterflies

*Raha Namdari, Aubrey Elementary*

I've been there once or twice,  
 From an old widows advice.  
 She told me to follow the butterflies,  
 But go alone with no alibis.  
 I have a smile spread across my face,  
 For, nobody knows of my secret place.

Then the next day or two,  
 I saw butterflies as they flew.  
 So I followed them night and day,  
 To a field with the prettiest rosebay.  
 I skipped and pranced with grace,  
 For, nobody knows of my secret place.

As I dance and laugh alone,  
 There's a distant fluttering tone.  
 So I glance up to the sky,  
 And right above me millions of beautiful butterflies.  
 I twirled and laughed apace,  
 For, nobody knows of my secret place.  
 The sun sinks down very slowly,  
 But I must get back home quickly.  
 The one beautiful monarch led the way,  
 And before you know it I arrived home midday.  
 I also collected some rosebay to put in a vase,  
 For, nobody knows of my secret place.

## I am Ecstasy

*Dougal Power-Otero, Brentwood Park Elementary*

I am born from a tube,  
 inside of a lab.  
 Scientists are my parents,  
 the ones who brought me into this world,  
 along with my brother Meth.  
 They made me for medicinal purposes;  
 Now I think they regret it.  
 I wonder why?  
 I take lives of the young,  
 The people who just want to have fun.  
 Teenagers are my largest audience,  
 millions of them.  
 The ones who think they are cool,  
 because they're taking the "wild ride."  
 I live with the rich.  
 I live with the poor.  
 I live with everyone,  
**Everywhere.**  
 In barns and stables.  
 In houses and schools.  
 Even in hotels and resorts.  
 They chew me and snort me,  
 in my not-so-natural habitat.  
 At parties and celebrations,  
 to make them happier.  
 To make them feel better about themselves,  
 at least,  
 for a while.  
 While most of my effects are temporary,  
 some can be permanent,  
 some can be deadly.  
 I make people happy,  
 I make people want to dance,  
 I even reduce anxiety.  
 But after they get high,  
 they don't know what's coming for them.

Once they have tried me,  
 They are hooked.  
 Trapped in an ever-lasting void,  
 of side effects and risks  
 I make them have trouble concentrating,  
 I make them dizzy,  
 I make them lose their appetite.  
 When they take me,  
 they risk their life.  
 They can starve,  
 they can dehydrate.  
 I act fast on their brain receptors.  
 They all know this.  
 But they took the risk,  
 for a few hours of enhanced emotions.  
 When the parents of these teenagers  
 come looking for who killed their child,  
 they can't put the blame on me.  
 It was their choice to take me;  
 They knew the risks.  
 They knew they might die;  
 But they took the risk,  
 just to get high.  
 Even if it was only once,  
 I can still kill them.  
 They know who I am.  
 I have many names,  
 Abbreviated I'm MDMA,  
 but no one can be bothered  
 to say all of that.  
 So they gave me a name,  
 one they all know best,  
 I'm a parent's worst nightmare.  
 Allow me to introduce myself.  
 My name is Ecstasy...

## Death from Above

*Grayden Staschuk, Gilpin Elementary*

As long as forever I fly through the sky  
I reach toward hope and pray not to die  
I am a pilot; I have flown all my life.  
But the hardest part is saying goodbye to my wife.  
I slide into the cockpit  
and pull the mask over my head.  
I haul down the canopy, and for the runway I head.  
I thrust the engine forward,  
and get a message from the bridge  
I glance at my radar, and feel myself cringe,  
For all I could see was my death in disguise,  
Like a swarm of dust high in the sky

I approach my enemy and my blood runs cold.  
My body goes numb; I try to stay bold  
Like a broken winged bird, still trying to fly.  
The feeling occurs it's my time to die.  
I fight to the death, struggle to exist  
I blunder, I'm hit, my plane in a twist  
I am still breathing, but I feel half alive.  
Panicked, yet drained, trying to survive  
It's over. I eject.  
My plane is a wreck  
As long as forever, I fly through the sky.  
I reach toward hope, and pray not to die.

## The Woods

*Simran Garcha, Clinton Elementary*

The woods  
So soundless  
Makes your heart stop  
A taunting owl  
Cooing above me  
With glowing eyes  
In a four story high oak  
Waiting to trap a brown Fat Juicy mouse  
Cowardly stepping into the open  
From the dead clusters of bush  
A chill rushed through my spine  
As if I'm in an Arctic blizzard  
Struggling to get warm  
Woods surrounding me  
Dark and lifeless  
Waiting  
For an invisible, bright force  
Which awakens the sleeping woods  
So mysterious  
Goes away in a flash

The night turns ablaze  
Glistening  
With fall like colours  
Little baby eagles  
Chirping away  
As if nobody was there  
A pack of wolves  
Using their high pitched howls  
To mark their territory  
And small fluffy white bunnies  
With black eyes  
Hopping like the wood would stay there forever  
Guarding them from harm's way  
Wherever  
However  
Whenever  
And forever

## Who Am I

*Christina Heslop, Gilpin Elementary*

I am the color of gold coins  
at the end of a rainbow,  
    But I am more precious than money  
    and more special than a treasure.  
I am sunrise on an early spring morning,  
    But I am never awake at that time.  
I am a spare blanket  
at the end of my owner's bed,  
    But I am not made of wool.  
I am alert like a motion sensor,  
    But I do not stay in one place for very long.  
My eyes sparkle like sunlight reflecting off water,  
    But I am not a lake dweller.  
I swim swiftly and gracefully like a dolphin  
and sound as happy as a seal,  
    But I do not live in the ocean.  
I swim out far and always return to shore,  
like a fisherman reels his line,  
    But I do not eat rainbow trout.  
I gently swipe at you to show affection,  
    But I am not a cat.  
My fur is softer than a horse's mane,  
    But please do not ride on me.  
I make a nest like a bird in spring  
before I go to sleep,  
    But I do not fly.  
I run as swift as a cheetah  
and as graceful as a gazelle,  
    But I do not live in Africa.  
My floppy ears fly up and down  
like flip-flops on running feet,  
    But I would rather chew shoes.  
I have polar bear feet,  
    But I do not live in the Arctic.  
My paws are as busy as an elf at Christmas time,  
    But I am not one of Santa's helpers.

My ears are as soft as velvet  
and as smooth as silk,  
    But I am not fabric.  
I am bigger than a baby and smaller than a lady,  
    But I am neither and love them both.  
I drink with a slurpy tongue,  
like a child eating a lollipop,  
    But I should not eat candy.  
I am as happy as a child at a birthday party,  
    But I should not eat cake.  
I turn three pirouettes before curling up,  
    But I am not a dancer.  
I get the ball like a soccer player trying to win,  
    But I am not Christine Sinclair.  
I run just for fun,  
    But I am not an athlete.  
I snore quietly and peacefully,  
like Grampa watching TV,  
    But I am not an old man.  
My voice is louder than a referee,  
    But I am not an expert on sports.  
I understand my owner's feelings  
and make her happy when she's sad,  
    But I am not a mind reader or a clown.  
I am a loyal pal, like a life-long school,  
    But I am not allowed at school.  
I protect my owner and her family,  
    But I am not a bodyguard.  
My owner loves me like a family member,  
    But I am not in the family tree.  
I am my owner's best friend  
and we could not love each other more,  
    But I am not human.  
Who am I?  
I am a well-loved Golden Retriever,  
    But I exist only in Christina's mind.

***Juliana Valerio, Brentwood Park Elementary***

\$24,000,000 dollars and counting.  
An average BC boy  
who never even dreamed of this.  
Today I will live.  
That is all that has certainty.  
I am unsure about tomorrow,  
But for today,  
I will live

## Summer Time Turn

*Bela Moise, University Highlands Elementary*

The roar of the ocean and the absence of the usual bustle of people filled my ears as I let out a contented sigh. Not too loud nor too quiet, the perfect environment for a first time surfer like myself. I let out a readying breath, trying to calm my jittering nerves without success. "Bela! Are you just going to stare or actually hop on?!" called my father from the ocean, motioning towards the foam surfboard that lazily floated on top of the ocean waves. "Coming!" I called back as I hurriedly splashed through the water tinged with cold. "Be careful!" my mother called from the soft, sandy shore, with my brother in her lap. I dismissed her warning with a wave as I clambered up on to the "surfboard"...

"Just like that princess, through the waves!" my father called encouragingly somewhere near the shore, "Don't go too far!" my mother added. "Yay!" was all my adorable 4 year old-brother had to say. I smiled, my confidence rising with every wave. *I think I can stand on it now* I thought. I turned towards the shore facing my family. "Daddy can I" – and suddenly I was under. For a moment or two, I wasn't sure what was happening - perhaps these events still needed processing, or perhaps I was simply in denial, from what I don't know – it didn't last long though for a moment later, I realized with an alarming clarity that I was enveloped by water (not to mention upside down).

The flurry of emotions inside me were MANY, but all so clear. There was a choking fear, threatening to squeeze the breath right out of me. There was anger, at what I'm not really sure. There was even a small crazed part of me that held delight. And yet, even with all the turmoil of emotions storming, raging inside I was inexplicably calm and reassured. When I opened my eyes I saw nothing but a blue blur, and strange shapes that resembled shells. *Funny, I thought this looks like it belongs in a Disney film.* The scene however, was suddenly wrenched away, as I felt myself thrown back against the waves. And just like that, I found myself strewn across the sand and spluttering out the salt water that presently occupied my mouth. There was a peculiar silence for a moment, then broken by the crashing of the waves. With a strange calmness, I picked myself up, and simply agreed aloud, to never do that again. And with that I began my walk down the beach towards my frantic family. Constantly promenading near the waves as I did so, as if to taunt the ocean.

## Collision Course

*Edward Tian, Parkcrest Elementary*

I hurriedly stuffed my documents into my briefcase, and glanced furiously at my watch. 6:48 am. I sighed in dismay, realizing I wouldn't make it to the office by 7 am. The clock hands ticked eerily, laughing as if they were mocking me. Covering my watch with my suit sleeve, I swiftly slid my feet into my polished black dress shoes and stumbled out the door, locking it behind me. Walking along the sidewalk at a brisk pace, I pulled out my cell phone to send a quick text message to my boss, notifying him I would be late. As soon as I pocketed my phone, I started sprinting down the hill towards the crosswalk near the bus station, with the back of my suit jacket flapping in the wind, and my dress shoes thumping hollowly on the rock-strewn sidewalk. Upon reaching the crosswalk, I waited for the Pedestrian Crossing light to turn on, before stepping onto the road. Dressed in black, I might not have been quite visible to some drivers, so I made sure to look left and right constantly. The road was free of cars, which was a plus sign for me. I decided to start jogging when I was about ten meters from the other side of the road, thinking I had made it safely to the other side. Suddenly a pair of white headlights temporarily blinded me, causing me to stumble to the ground. I thought I heard the driver screech a stream of expletives as he tried to swerve around me, but my body had no strength to move, as if I had been frozen in time. I was barely able to turn my head before the steel frame of the car smashed into my back, shattering my spine, while I screamed in agony. The driver slammed on the brakes, but it was too late. I was slammed into the nearest telephone pole like a ragdoll, and my body convulsed in excruciating pain. Blood pounded in my head, and I slumped to the ground; bloody, and powerless. My eyes were filled with blood and gravel, but I was able to make out a shouting figure of the policeman. And that was the last memory I had; the day I lost my life on a collision course.

## Memories

*Samantha Loutet, Gilpin Elementary*

The last thing I remember is a waterfall of glass. It's beautiful, but frighteningly so. It rains over my head, lightly cutting my skin. I think I put my hands up to cover my face, but I'm not sure. Everything's a little fuzzy. The doctors told me I hit my head, and I'm sure I did. If I try to remember anything before that waterfall of glass, all I see is light. There are hazy figures moving around, but they are distorted, like images behind a screen.

A woman came by my room today. She told me her name was Penelope and asked me if I remembered her. When I told her I didn't, she started to cry. She sank to her knees, her hands covering her face, sobs raking her body. Her shoulders shook with so much intensity I thought she was having a seizure. I didn't know what I did wrong, so I awkwardly tried to help her. Between tears, she told me she was my mother. My mother.

I don't even remember my own mother.

They told me that I would remember eventually, but I don't think so. How can someone get something from nothing? I know my memories are gone, I know they're not coming back. Maybe I will go home with the bunch of strangers that are my family and start over. Maybe they won't want me anymore. I am not their daughter, not their sister. All I am is a shell of who I used to be.

I read a book today. It said that our memories make us who we are. I don't have any memories, so who does that make me? I know my name is Rosetta Rollison. but I don't know anything about myself. Who is this Rosetta that everyone talks about? Is she funny, sarcastic, nice? I will never know for myself. I will only know of the stories people tell me, but those are their memories, not mine.

I have accepted that I will have to start over. It doesn't matter who the old Rosetta was, all that matters is who I choose to be from now on. I am Rosetta Rollison, and I am who I chose to be. I will not be defined by what others expect. I will be my own person because I am me. I am not the girl who went with you to the park last week, I am the girl who is sitting in this hospital writing this right now.

You can take my memories, but you can't take my soul.

## Why No Two Snowflakes are Alike

*Emily Su, Seaforth Elementary*

Long ago in ancient Athens, Greece, there lived a demigod named Creceus. Creceus was the son of the great god of messengers Hermes and was invited by his father to assist him on Olympus. He graciously accepted. Even though Hermes was god of messengers and travellers, he was also god of trickery and thievery. These were characteristics that all his children inherited.

(Using his powers) Creceus snuck into Khoine's workshop. "Khoine the goddess of ice and snow will never know I was here!" exclaimed Creceus.

He stole her snowflake pattern, which allowed her to make snowflakes. Enraged, Khoine searched high and low for her pattern. For one hundred days she searched; all over the world mortals grew wary of the strong sun. The god of winds Aeolus, tried to please the mortals with his cold winds, but accidentally blew their crops away.

Athena, annoyed with Khoine's carelessness, said, "Khoine, why do you still search for your pattern when you yourself know it is hopeless? See those poor mortals begging you to return? Foolish girl, do you not see the simple solution staring you in the face? Just make a new pattern."

"I see I have been foolish Athena. I shall take your advice and create this new pattern," said Khoine. So she made her new pattern, unaware that Creceus had overheard her conversation with Athena and planned again to steal Khoine's pattern.

The next day Khoine couldn't find her pattern. So she made another pattern and again it disappeared. This happened three more times, till one day Creceus heard someone crying by the river of sorrows. It was Khoine.

"What's wrong Khoine?"

"Five times I have made a snow pattern, yet five times it has gone missing," Khoine bellowed between huge sobs, "no matter how many times I make a pattern it always goes missing!"

Feeling guilty, Creceus suggested "why do you need a pattern? Can you not create snowflakes just by melting the chunks of ice together into shapes?" But again someone was listening. As Creceus went to leave he was met by Zeus, king of the sky and Olympus.

"Creceus, I see you are so much like your father", exclaimed Zeus, "this reminds me of when he stole Apollo's cattle and gave him the lyre he made! What I'm saying is that even though you were wrong to steal Khoine's snow patterns, you, like your father, fixed your mistake. Like father, like son!"

And that is why no two snowflakes are alike.

## The Day

*Yiyun (Evian) Tang, Marlborough Elementary*

Today is the day I have feared to come all year; today is the speech contest I have wanted to do to prove that I am not shy. But my stomach is full of butterflies trying to find a way out. I also haven't slept well in the last few weeks just thinking about it. The reason why I hate doing speeches is just that I have a terrible fear to talk in front of so many people and it makes me nervous that I'll say the wrong thing, or worse become speechless. I haven't been like this all my life but growing up just made me think more about what others say. When I was younger, I was a very curious and talkative girl. But why is that, that when we grow up we think of what others say? I often ask myself: "Why do I have to think like that?" I really don't understand why I have to think like that. I don't understand why I changed so much, and it really bothers me the way others say I'm shy but I hope this speech lets a part of me shine and realize that I can push away the awful thoughts. I know that part of me is just hidden inside and I just have to find it again.

On the way to school, I couldn't stop thinking about my speech. Whenever I try to think about something more cheerful it pops right back into my head like two magnets. Once I arrive at school, I know the speech contest will be starting very soon. Students, teachers and staff pile into the gymnasium. Luckily, I am not the first student who says their speech. But it looks like all of the participants are doing amazingly well. That makes my hands gradually become cold and my heart starts pounding so hard it seems like it's in a cage and wants freedom. Next, the teacher announces my name. "*Ba boom, ba boom, ba boom.*" my heart pounds. I walk slowly, carefully placing my foot with each step knowing that in the next few minutes will be my chance to prove the others wrong. Everyone claps and then is silent. Not a sound to be heard. I don't look at the audience, I stare straight towards the back wall forcing myself to think that I am alone, practicing for my speech. I open my mouth and words flutter out of my mouth, so smooth and clear. It seems like the butterflies did find a way out after all. Before I know it, everyone cheers and I smile so hard my face hurts! I cannot believe what I just did. I am so proud I didn't even hear the teacher saying that I have won the speech contest!

I have never felt so happy in my life, now that I have fought my fear, I know I have a great life ahead.

## Red Velvet

*Erin Lum, Seaforth Elementary*

I have anxiety.

My parents sent me to this camp for teens to regain my confidence. So here I am, at a camp with a girl who just happens to be the bully that tormented me in pre-school.

Rosa is a tall girl with red hair wearing a velvet blazer. *Out of all the people in the world, Rosa has to be here.* I remember the first day of pre-school she tormented me, pushed me around, and called me names most four year olds don't even understand. After that I would come to school scared, which developed into anxiety.

She tried to talk to me, but I shut her out. *Rosa can't mess with my confidence again.* I pulled out my iPod and listened to music, completely ignoring her existence.

Then it happened. I tripped and fell in front of everyone. . . . including Rosa. I embarrassed myself in front of HER. Tears leaked out of my eyes as I dashed off.

I hid in the shadows of the trees, crying and cursing. *Why does everything bad happen to me?!* Then Rosa appeared. "Are you alright? Why are you upset?" She was trying to comfort me.

"Why are you so *mean*?!" I screeched. Rosa took a step back, puzzled yet scared. "Why did you bully me? You made me have anxiety! You ruined *my* life!" She seemed to be remembering. Soon after her eyes filled with round tears. She sped off.

I suddenly realized I had gone too far. I didn't intend for her to be hurt. I began to trace Rosa's path. I found her sitting on a rock, with her velvet blazer on the ground, sobbing. Then I saw her bare arms and the bruises that covered them. The truth came rushing to me: Rosa was abused. That's why she came to pre-school with a face soaked in tears, body covered in bandages. She was just doing what she was taught at home: bullying. All I could say was a cheesy "Sorry." I felt so terrible.

We talked for hours after that. Rosa apologized about her bullying and explained how her mother had abused her since her father passed away. Recently the neighbours witnessed the abuse and called the police. Rosa's mother was sent to jail, while she was sent to camp until her aunt came back from Germany. We became close friends. But after camp ended Rosa and I lost touch.

Now and then I still think about Rosa, and how her life is much more complicated than mine. There are so many things I don't know about in this world, but Rosa helped me see the positive side of life, and helped me be grateful for what I have. I am glad I met Rosa...that redhead in the velvet blazer...Red Velvet.

## Grade 8

### Instead of Marriage

*Emma R. Wong*  
*Burnaby Central Secondary*

She slayed the green scaly beast,  
she saved the prince.  
Dressed in nothing but rustic paper bags,  
dishevelled was she.

Frizzy hair, concealed in dirt  
and a weeks long trek-through-the-woods rank,  
*not* your average beauty queen.  
Yet, "Marry me!" she cried to the prince,  
"for I have saved you."

Neat hair, straight teeth  
and a fragrance of manly flowers.  
Dressed in the finest linens,  
perfectly put-together was the prince,  
but, he was arrogant as could be.

And so he repelled her proposal,  
in a not-so-friendly manner,  
rejected her as he'd done to every single other.

Well, underneath all the tethers,  
really was a beautiful girl,  
one the prince never lived to see.  
For the village girl had a temper too.

### Tears

*Christina Leung*  
*Alpha Secondary*

A shining droplet slides down my face  
Down, down into the still lake in my chest,  
Making it ripple with feelings left unsaid.  
The drip making a silent echo laced with regret  
More and more come,  
Reviving what has been long since forgotten.

Drip-drop, drip-drop, the sound creating a beat.  
A beat that holds all the pain,  
All the sadness,  
All the longing.  
The beat that is then weaved into a song,  
A song which speaks about the innocent me  
I used to be.

I sing, and sing while the world moves on, and on  
Shining droplets sliding down my face,  
And shattering like glass when it meets  
the cold unforgiving ground.  
I will continue to sing until the last drops  
have been spilled.  
I sing until I see a future,  
I sing until I see a sign.

Until then I wait,  
I wait for the day for when I'll find my dreams.  
I wait for the will to move on.  
For the past to find the present,  
And the present to move on to the future.  
For I have eternity by my side.



## Robin, There

*Jusaca Xam, Alpha Secondary*

Robin rests rustily  
 On the soft moss below  
 Fatigued, fragile, and faded  
 Are the two, who both lost:  
 One a soul  
 And one a friend-  
 Porcelain legs fresh out of the shell,  
 prance precariously on the fibers  
 Of the fertility below  
 Hugging the moat  
 Of the Robin Residence  
 The modest moss has seen many  
 Akins of the family  
 Now,  
 Robin rests rustily  
 On the soft moss below  
 His heart slowly humming  
 His tiny feet trembling  
 And his marble gaze glazing  
 Yet, his red crayon wig  
 Remains  
 Proudly painted  
 Thick with acrylic  
 Anne's raspberry cordial  
 The color never dusting  
 For the varnish remains  
 Fresh to death,  
 even when carried to his grave  
 Yes, a Robin clicks his jewel- encrusted staff  
 At the legs of his throne  
 Once  
 Twice  
 Three times  
 And amongst all the fame-  
*"Mother, look it's a Robin! It's dead!"*  
 A Robin remains  
 In its diploma- receiving state  
 Preserved and precise  
 Like a mummy in Cairo  
 Not like jam; spliced  
 For he knows Gaea has marked him  
 With her red painted kiss  
 A gift from nature  
 And a Robin's last wish  
 ~

Moss mends  
 The grave of Robin  
*"Bring in the marks- only the finest;  
 this lad deserves the best,  
 he's a Robin, it's timeless."*  
 The Robin Residence roots  
 Clasp their fingers tightly  
 But they don't pick their nails  
 They hold Robin up mightily  
 On the blood rail  
 Teetering trickily  
 To the other side-  
 The Death side that is,  
 the word only spoken shakily  
 Through the forest green  
 The ferns lush their love  
 The weeds whisper to above  
 The squirrels stand solemnly;  
 Gypsy magic eyes  
 stare at the skin, of Robin's death sin  
 Even the foxes  
 So large and statuesque  
 Grimly grate at the edges of the grave  
 And the Robin-  
 With his cathedral worthy chest,  
 Puffs proudly, at the promise of death  
 Moss calls all attention:  
  
*"Woodland, kindly gathered here today;  
 sisters and brothers of the forest are we,  
 friends of Robin we always will be,  
 we were pulled by our hearts,  
 not by invitations--  
 have we all arrived,  
 -- for Robin's funeration."*

## Don't Hide Your Scars

*Lila Mooney*

*Burnaby Central Secondary*

Here is the scar  
     Where the knife slipped,  
     And the blood ran –  
     Down, down, down, to kiss  
     The face of the onion  
     You were chopping  
 And here's where the miscreant  
     Pin ambushed you,  
     Through dark, slippery waves  
     Of cloth.  
 There's the crisscross of their scalpels  
     As they cut open your belly  
     To save your life.  
 There was a rusty nail,  
     And that,  
     A shard of glass,  
     On a forgotten beach  
     Under the moon  
 You turn your face away,  
     Cast your eyes down,  
 But I squeeze your hand and smile.  
     Time has healed your wounds,  
 And shown the world how  
     Strong you are  
 Because through the  
 pain,  
 And the  
 fear,  
 You saw  
 The Beauty:  
     The red on the  
     White of the  
     Onion in the  
     Light;  
     The smooth folds  
     Of cloth against  
     Your skin;  
     The life over  
     Death, and  
     The wind's  
     Dancing gales,  
 And the ocean's song in your ear.  
 Look: this scar marks the  
     Start, this one the  
     End.  
  
 And here, I see the heart that  
     Broke  
 And learned to sing again.

## Jamais Assez

*Mara Mijatović*

*École Moscrop Secondaire*

Tu me donnes de l'eau, je veux du jus,  
 Tu me donnes une pomme, je veux une poire,  
 Tu me donnes une poule, je veux une dinde,  
 Mais il y a toujours des enfants qui n'ont rien,  
  
 Tu me donnes une chambre,  
     je veux un appartement,  
 Tu me donnes une maison, je veux un château,  
 Tu me donnes une voiture, je veux un avion,  
 Mais il y a toujours des enfants qui n'ont rien.  
  
 Tu me donnes un jouet, je veux un téléphone,  
 Tu me donnes un ordinateur, je veux une télévision,  
     Tu me donnes de l'argent,  
     je vais toujours en vouloir plus,  
 Mais il y a toujours des enfants qui n'ont rien.  
  
 Tu me donnes de la paix, je veux du luxe,  
 Tu me donnes de la santé, je veux du pouvoir,  
 Tu me donnes une éducation, je me plains,  
 Mais il y a toujours des enfants qui n'ont rien.  
  
 Il n'y a jamais assez, je veux toujours plus,  
     J'ai tout ce que j'ai besoin,  
     mais je ne suis pas contente,  
 J'ai des trucs qui ne sont pas nécessaires,  
     mais ce n'est jamais assez,  
 Et dans le monde, quelque part,  
     il y a quelqu'un qui n'a rien.

# HELLEVATOR

Micah Lau, École Moscrop Secondaire

Les sièges montent, ça pause au sommet  
 5...4...3...2... 1..**DING!!!**  
**WHOOSH!!!** Les sièges tombent comme une pièce de béton  
 Je ferme mes yeux, je suis prochain  
 Comment est-ce que mes amis m'ont convaincu de le faire?  
 Je donne mon billet et je suis mes amis aux sièges,  
 Mes jambes sont des ~~nouilles~~ **mouillées**  
 Les ceintures de sécurité sont mes amies, ils me gardent en place  
 Toutes les assistantes quittent la place et ferme les barrières  
 Mes mains, mouillées de sueur, sont comme des **chutes d'eau**  
 J'agrippe les poignées et nous nous levons lentement  
 On atteint le sommet et ça pause, je peux voir tout le monde petit comme des fourmis  
 Je ferme mes yeux très forts et nous **tombons**  
**AAAAHHHHHH**, le vent souffle et pousse contre mon visage  
 Mon estomac baisse, mon cœur bat aussi vite qu'un guépard  
 Mon visage blanc est le visage d'un vampire, et **BOING**, on frappe le bas

## La Forêt

Cassandra Merkens, École Cariboo Hill Secondaire

Vous marchez dans la forêt tropicale. La senteur des fleurs et des arbres tropicaux entrent dans votre nez. L'air humide autour de vous semble agréable. Les oiseaux tropicaux chantent des chansons qui sont belles et étranges. Vous entendez un petit bruit, vous tournez vers le bruit, là en haut de vous sur une branche est un jaguar. Il était accroupi ces muscles étaient tendus. Vous étiez gelé à la place, les yeux jaunes sont concentrés sur vos yeux. Vous ne bougez pas, vous ne savez pas quoi faire, le jaguar montre ses dents à vous, vous pouvez voir chaque dent pointue, vous commencez à transpirer. Soudainement le jaguar se ramasse et il bondit vers vous. Vous vous fermez vos yeux et attendez pour les dents pointues de déchirer votre corps mais, cette sensation ne vient jamais. Vous ouvrez vos yeux, vous êtes dans votre chambre, vous êtes dans votre appartement, vous êtes en sécurité. Vous ouvrez vos rideaux et regardez fixement la vue que vous regardez chaque matin, votre vue est d'une jungle faite du béton.

Vous essayez d'imaginer la forêt tropicale encore mais, vous ne pouvez pas car vous n'avez jamais vu une forêt tropicale dans votre vie. Vous avez seulement vu les forêts dans des films ou lu au sujet des forêts dans des livres. Vous sortez de votre appartement et marchez sur le trottoir, vous regardez autour de vous. La senteur que vous sentez est un mélange des déchets et l'essence. L'air autour de vous est épais et lourd, vous ne vous sentez pas malade car vous êtes habitué à l'air. Il y n'a pas beaucoup d'oiseaux car la plupart sont morts et sont empaillés dans un musée. Vous entendez une poubelle qui tombe sur terre, vous tournez vers le bruit, là en derrière de vous il y a un petit chat. Le chat est très mince et efflanqué mais, il y a quelque chose au sujet du chat. Le chat, bien qu'il soit mince et efflanqué, semble fier. Vous apportez de la nourriture au chat pour la prochaine semaine. Finalement vous gagnez la confiance du chat et vous le prenez à votre maison. Le chat grandit à être très fort et il semble de plus en plus comme le jaguar. Vous ne voyez plus la forêt tropicale dans votre sommeil.

## The Imperfect Dinner

*William Shen, Burnaby North Secondary*

Hot, wet steam blurs my vision as the distinctly foul odor of something burning fills my nose and clings to the back of my throat. My back aches from an hour of bending over, my legs are throbbing from standing still for long periods of time and I don't enjoy the painful heat of the stove I am standing beside. Taking a step back, I free myself from the madness I'm in. I realize that I was the one who got me into this mess, though I never expected it to be a mess.

Last night, as my family settled around our little dining table, my mother walked over with the final dish. She proudly set the dish in the center of the table and was beaming as she explained, "This is a new recipe I just learned today. It took a whole lot of time and effort to make but I think it's worth it."

"Well it doesn't look that great," I muttered, poking the dish suspiciously with the end of my chopstick, as if it were some extraterrestrial substance. "And seems simple to me."

"Oh really?" my mom said, her smile fading. "Well if that's the case, would you like to make dinner tomorrow?"

"Okay, I will then," I had said with a shrug.

This afternoon, I confidently opened up the fridge and took out the necessary ingredients thinking, "*This can't possibly take over an hour, why does my mom think it's so difficult?*" Washing and peeling the vegetables was all right, but it still took around 15 minutes. Everything after got worse and worse. My normally precise and artistic hands were only able to clumsily chop everything into unequal pieces. An hour had already passed before I finally moved on to actually cooking.

And here I was, lethargically standing beside a heated stovetop, not sure what to do. The chicken stir-fry was burnt all over, and my soup was ruined as well. Even worse, I hadn't even started on the other dishes. I was completely exasperated at how making a meal had taken up a majority of my afternoon. In fact, it was already dinnertime. "*I could be surfing the internet right now,*" I think, "*or playing basketball, or listening to music, or actually — anything is better than this.*"

Then I remember a quote a friend once told me, "*It's not about perfection, it's about effort.*" Now the expression finally makes absolute sense, and out of the blue, realization seems to appear like one of those sketchy light bulbs popping out of a person's head in a cheesy, cartoon advertisement. It finally occurs to me that all those countless times that my mom made dinner — or rather, anytime *anyone* makes or gives me *anything* — I should be a lot more thankful towards them. Even if their work is not flawless, they still put time and effort into it, which is the true most prominent factor that deserves to be appreciated. We often simply look at a finished product and forget that basically everything that we have is the result of the time and labor of others. Thus we should acknowledge as well as respect them for their work and know that nothing is perfect, so why demand it?

## I See You

*Julia Colasurdo, Alpha Secondary*

I see you approaching the grand sale, all dressed up in your plaid dress and braids on either side of your head. You look interesting; your small round face with dimples and piercing blue eyes. You and your mother come close to a table where I am lying down. She whispers something in your ear. You shrug and turn towards me. Your mouth drops open and your eyes widen. A smirk comes across your face and you grab me and pick me up. I am missing an eye. I have for centuries. I have a secret. A secret no one knows until the last time you see me. For this reason, I have been in many households and have seen many different little boys and girls. I always leave a mystery. A mystery no one has figured out yet. You look left and right, behind you and ahead of you. You quickly shove me under your arm and run. You run for many blocks away from the sale, look around you and sit down on the side of the road panting. You pick me up, examine me and with a smirk, you rip off my other eye. You shove me in between some tree branches and walk away. I stay rammed in between the branches and wait.

\*\*\*

"What an ugly doll that was," I mumble to myself as I walk home alone. It smelled old and musty. "I've got better ones at home," I thought, "pretty ones with beautiful satin dresses all the way from Europe". I smirked. I know I'll get even better ones. The wind was starting to pick up as I started to turn the corner and approach a magnificent white mansion. I lift up my chin, cock my head, purse my lips and walk in. I go upstairs into my massive room where I notice a beautiful doll on my rose colored bed still in its box. I pick it up, and notice the eyes didn't even roll like they were supposed to. "What's the point of a doll if the eyes don't even move?!" I yell at the top of my lungs waiting for someone to appear. No one came. I sigh. "No one ever pays attention to me." I open the window, then "POW!" my head jerks back and my vision goes blurry.

I hear a dripping sound and force my eyes open. Blood. I can't see what's happening. I can't move my eyes. I can only see five doctors dressed in white leaning over a body lying beside me wearing an ugly plaid dress. She had messy braids on either side of her head. "Huh. Why is she even in my room?" I start to hear a loud cry come from someone. The body was being taken away. The door shut. I try to move off my bed. I realize I can't. I'm stuck. I'm in a box.

"Well that did it," said a small whisper coming from the window.

## **My Name is Freedom**

*Aariyana Sayani, Moscrop Secondary*

I was feared. I was unwelcomed. Nobody knew who I was and nobody cared. Just a blade of grass shivering in the wind, slicing through the heaven white clouds and ocean blue sky. Or at least that's what everyone thought. The way I moved was so elegant, it was unspeakable. How I began is a story not everyone should hear but the ones who decide to, are privileged. The life of a seed is a life well unseen, but a life still willing to be lived. The cycle is yet to be broken.

I haven't always been this way, you know. I used to be needed, undefeated if you will. But that was a simpler time for me. Now I'm just mistreated, and misconceived. Don't blame me, I'm only human. Or, actually, I'm not even human. Humans, don't turn out to be like me.

Let me tell you why I became like this. I was afraid. Afraid of not being seen, afraid of not being heard, afraid of being the only one that is, the way that I am. In reality, I was afraid of being me. I was a seed. I thought the crispy, auburn soil, was all there was to the world. I thought the world was created by a shadow, with a decrepit little heart and no reason to make serenity with his own problems. I thought that the world may work in mysterious ways, some perhaps too mysterious to decrypt. So why try? We are what we are. I was wrong.

I didn't know that there was a world beyond mine. Seeds like me, we don't get out much, and some of us never will. All of us waiting for an old shyster to wilt, but it never happens. And when it does, it's always the A team at the top of the list.

I had no idea that the life to live was the one above ground. I thought this was it for the seeds, and that plants were a materialistic creation, by God. But I was young. What did I know? I guess I just wasn't the lucky one.

The beautiful world above the crunchy dirt was a world waiting for my excellence. They were waiting for my blessings. Waiting, for me to come out of my shell. And I? Well, I was doing the best I could. Striving for excellence, looking deeper into the true meaning of it all, looking at a different way to perceive the world. But what I was neglecting, what I was disregarding, was unthinkable. I was ignoring the key to this endless blackboard of night. I was ignoring love.

So I took the time, and let myself feel the true warmth of the sunlight on my single long-standing leaf. I found myself high and dry, yet again. Who knew? Even with the embracement of light in my fragile, little heart, I still wasn't enough.

Soul searching was getting tiring. I realized quickly, that the world is a fragile place. One that can't be fixed, but that is yet to be broken. I'd never know it this way, and I never intended to. But I guess that's just the way I interpret it. First impressions are different for everyone.

I decided to give up finally. There was nothing left to say for what I had done. I don't know why I did that, or if I even realize what I actually did to be honest. I do however know one thing. That it was worth all the while. Because even though I did not discover how the gears move and when the world will stop spinning, I recognized something within myself. I recognized that I am determined. That, shocked even me.

I will still continue to look for my answer, but I have not yet found it. Maybe it is out there somewhere, just waiting to be found by a seed no greater than man himself but no less than what he strives to be. But one thing I know that is certain is that wherever the answer to my question may be, my identity is in it and my fate will no more be questionable. Trials and tribulations are no recipe for disaster but rather a recipe for triumph. I am a life lesson. My name is Freedom.

## **The Lump in the Blanket**

*Fiona Zheng, Burnaby North Secondary*

*Focus on what is at hand.*

Tiny snowflakes danced outside my window that afternoon. I was mending the side of a cotton blanket. The sharp thumping of the needle on the sewing machine rang through the house and stayed in the air with a soft echo. I was 10 at the time.

Downstairs, I could hear my mother's upset voice tell my brother to remove his teddy from the oven. My 5 year old brother had a habit of forgetting where he hid his toys.

My mind wandered off into space. I was not allowed to go outside to frolic in the snow until I finished fixing the blanket. This left me only to fantasize.

A deafening whirring noise emitted from the machine. The thread had run out.

I stomped to my closet door and tugged it open. Ignoring the pile of junk that pooled at my feet, I pulled out a cerulean coloured thread.

Suddenly, someone behind me let loose a flurry of giggles.

I whipped around, only to see my little brother deliberately shove a box of pins off my desk. The blanket I was working on was innocently lying on the floor.

My vision clouded red as I screeched at my brother. He continued snickering as I shoved the pest out of my room and slammed my door shut. Even with a door between us, I could hear the little mosquito buzzing with laughter. I let out an exasperated sigh and plucked all the pins off of the floor and dumped them into the box. They landed into their container with a clinking sound just like wind chimes that hang at our neighbour's front door.

With my eyes on the inviting snow that was begging for me to jump on it, I started sewing again.

After hours of torturous labour, I finished fixing the blanket. I grinned from ear to ear. Even little brothers couldn't stop me from the snow.

I got up, preparing to show my mother the blanket. I straightened the blanket. There was a small lump in the middle.

When my brother spilled the pins, it must've bumped our last bobbin (a circular piece of sewing equipment) into the blanket, I decided. I probably didn't notice because I was daydreaming.

I stepped on the bobbin. I didn't want to take the whole blanket apart for the one piece of equipment. The bobbin only buckled under my weight, so I stomped harder, like the carpet was on fire. The bobbin was flattened like a pancake.

Quickly, I hopped to my mother's room and threw the blanket at her. The blanket floated into her arms. I couldn't wait to leap into the shower of white fluff outside. Before I could go out yet, she asked me a question.

"Have you seen your brother's toy car? It's his favourite red one."

I vigorously shook my head, as I tugged on my boots and stuck my hands in my pocket.

Out fell a bobbin.

My mind wandered back to the lump.

## The Tree Climbing Contest

*Shenna He, Burnaby North Secondary*

I feel suffocated; the park is entirely surrounded by people all ages, more people than I'd like. I scan the crowd, and my heart quickens when I see my competitors. Seth and his friends are staring up at the big oak tree, planning a strategy to climb up and retrieve the flag quicker than the others. My knuckles are white with concentration, and I squeeze my calf muscles so tight that pain starts radiating off my joints. My name is called out, but I am too caught up in my own thoughts to reply. Someone violently shakes my shoulder. My heart quickens and I swivel around hopeful that it is my friends. My heart sinks.

"You ready?" Seth asks, a careless smirk tugging on the edge of his lips.

"More than you'll ever be," I reply casually, but my quivering gives it away.

"Yo, you're trembling," Seth sneers, bursting out into hysterical laughter, "Look at you!"

"It's cold," I lie, pretending to rub my forearms, "I bet you're cold, too."

He says something back, but I ignore him, plastering a wide smile on my face so he won't get to me. The announcement comes on saying that we can start the lineup for the climb, and I bounce on my toes a couple of times before frantically swimming between the oceans of people.

I make sure I am at the back of the line, so I can learn a few things about the people in the front. At least that's what I try to convince myself. I know it is only because I am scared.

In a blink of an eye, it is my turn. The previous people get good times, about four minutes and a half at tops. Pressure builds up in my chest, and my heart drums wildly with determination. I glare at the towering tree, the anxious feeling once again sweeping over me, my mouth parched and as dry as sandpaper.

"Ready...On your mark... Get set! Go!" An ear-piercing whistle explodes into my ear. My first instinct is to scramble up the first branch. I gradually find the momentum, my fingers tightening around one branch, and then another, with my feet syncing the movements, stepping up one by one. I hear people yelling and screaming below, my confidence growing. *I'll show you, Seth*, I inwardly think. A smile creeps upon my face, and I lose focus.

A terrifying feeling races through me and my arm grazes roughly across the peeling bark. Everything fades into the background, and I feel myself fall, losing against the harsh wind, the swaying branches and the dusty blanket of a sky. I am almost sure I hear the ticks of the stop watch betraying me, holding me hostage.

When I do catch a hold of myself, I continue my way up, not looking at the reactions of the people below me, and approach the flag in triumph. I start my journey down, and when I jump off the last branch, I feel proud of myself.

I feel a light punch to my shoulder as I start to walk away. "Nice job," Seth says.

There is no hostility in his voice, and I know he means it.

## Rose

*Ruini Xu, Burnaby North Secondary*

"Hi there. This is Rose."

Her parents gently nudged her over to greet us. I turned my gaze to look at her. I saw a girl who was just like a doll, with smooth porcelain skin, cheeks with a pink flush, and large brown eyes framed by her long curly hair. Her dress was a rich dark blue, like the evening sky, with small, finely embroidered flower details on the soft fabric. In my eyes, she looked like a princess, and I was just a commoner who could not compare. I didn't like her. She was too perfect, just like a doll, and 6-year old me was jealous. I let my pride get the better of me, and turned and sulked away without greeting her.

While the adults were in the kitchen chattering away, and preparing the food, I pranced around my territory, the living room. She daintily tip-toed over to me like a graceful ballerina, as if to not disturb me, and in her soft tinkling voice, she asked, "Can I play with you?"

I turned to face her, making solid eye contact with her, giving her a glare that could freeze water solid, and I ignored her. We played this game of question and rejection for a while but she could not break through my stubborn wall that I built around myself, and eventually gave up trying. Her doll-like figure slunk away into a corner, then sighed her silent sigh of frustration, and started to play by herself. Alone. I felt victorious, but empty inside. I felt like a villain with no more motivation, almost like I was the one being ignored. I thought to myself, "Was jealousy the only reason why I ignored her?"

The thought tore through my pride and selfishness, leaving only curiosity, and I found myself next to her. She looked up at me with her innocent Bambi eyes with confusion written clearly on her small round face. I almost couldn't say the words, but swallowed my pride, took a deep breath and said, "You can play with me."

Rose's eyes were instantly brighter and a brilliant smile that was as blinding as the sun spread onto her face. I slowly cracked a smile back at her. The rest of the night, we were laughing and smiling like we were friends since the beginning of time. When dinner time rolled around, we had to get pried off the living room floor like tape, because we were unwilling to stop playing. We were inseparable, two peas in a pod, because we decided that we will stay together forever, and sealed it with a pinky promise.

When she had to leave, I gave her a doll of mine, one of my favourites in fact, to Rose, because I decided it looked like her, with the same hair, large eyes that are full of dreams, and that same smile she has. We hugged a final goodbye, an awkward embrace that only I could give, with arms almost tangled within each other's. We laughed in unison, but it was not as light-hearted knowing that she had to go. She slowly walked out, giving me a soft look with her eyes, and turned, with a tinge of sadness sitting on her shoulders. I took a deep breath, and shouted, as loud as I could, just so she would remember me, "BYE ROSE!" It was almost a soft echo in the night, but I could hear her tinkling laugh that sounded like sparkles, back at me.



## Reader

*Nikita Zhang, Burnaby North Secondary*

Every time it begins again. And every time it just keeps getting worse. It starts out okay, like it's just fifteen or twenty minutes out of my day to just finally...escape. But it always happens; dragging me deeper and deeper into a dark abyss of emotion. It separates me from what's real, it plays with my thoughts and changes the contrast between my view of fantasy and life. When I'm finally done, I never know if I should cry, laugh or let out a sigh of relief. Sometimes I just stare at the blank wall in front of me, doing nothing. My eyes go out of focus but my mind is still running wild with thoughts. I just sit. Unmoving. Listening to the faint hum of my refrigerator and the occasional cawing from crows outside my window... and it never gets better, just worse.

If you don't know what I'm talking about yet, I'm talking about reading. Let me be the first to tell you that it's no easy task. Well, for me at least. Books are wonderful things – they're an escape from the misshapen society we live in today, a fantasy land you can go in and out of as you please. But for some readers like me...it's a bit more complex than that. If you're like me, you can go into a whole different world, be someone else for a couple of hours and get away from everyone and everything. But you feel the emotions of the characters so deeply; that you cry when they cry, laugh when they laugh and your palms become sweaty and your heart races when they're scared. You are completely unaware of your external surroundings except for the dead tree with ink on it in your hands. Your eyes bear into the pages and you don't dare to blink until you finally read what you've wanted to. Finally though, when you're done reading, you try to morph back into reality; you try to figure out what's real or not real while still asking yourself countless questions that you know will never be answered. This is the worse part of a book – the ending. The whole thing is bittersweet, but if you ever ask me or any other reader, they'll tell you it's worth it.

Before I open up my book, I always get prepared. This usually means that I find myself a comfy, quiet place isolated from everyone else that might be in the house. Then I make myself a cup of hot chocolate and get a plate of Oreos. I always have a box of tissues too, just in case. Okay. I'm ready. Now I open up my book. The introduction is there like it always is and everything seems to be okay. But that's always what the author does – he or she tries to lure me into a trap sugar-coated with a seemingly perfect setting; making me think that nothing can possibly go wrong. Well anyway, there we are; in a jungle where we see nothing but vibrant plants and can hear nothing but friendly birds. We're completely unaware of the vicious tiger hiding in the bushes or the hundreds of poisonous spiders scattered across the forest ground. Then, the initial incident happens. We can escape this jungle now or venture deeper. Venture deeper? Okay. The author quickly whisks us into the rising action and the tension slowly rises. We adapt to one thing before the author introduces us into something new. And we are barely aware of the fact that we already fell into the trap. By now, I've finished my hot chocolate and there are only two Oreos left on the plate.

The rope lowers me down to the cave floor and I'm about to enter the tomb. I know the drill, pull three times on the rope if I'm in trouble and I'll get pulled back up. But the real concern is if I'll make it back in time. Maybe not. It's the climax. It's riveting. It's Exciting; Fast paced. I'm clutching the sides of the book for dear life, just barely skimming the pages so that I can finally get to the peak of the storyline. A few pages later and I'm there – the peak of the story; my eyes unblinking and bloodshot. My most inner emotions are played with and taunted mercilessly. Yet...I feel so empty; like I have no thoughts – just feelings. I read the words on the page, but I can only just barely comprehend it. My world starts to slow down and time is stretched out when all of the sudden I'm knocked back into my senses. A character is killed, a dark secret is revealed and finally, finally, finally...the falling action comes.

It's here. Sweet relief floods my body. My grip on the book however, doesn't loosen the slightest bit. My eyes are still glued to the pages though I'm more relaxed now, more content. I reach the very last pages and I read until there's nothing more to read. My eyes thirst for more but I know that there's nothing left except maybe an author's note or some acknowledgements. I read those too.

I feel quite empty now. It's like I've just lived an entire life through that book; now I'm done, but I'm still alive. I hear my faint breathing and the steady sound of my heartbeat. Empty, hollow...too stunned to move, I just sit, trying to morph back into reality. I'm no longer Katniss Everdeen or Percy Jackson anymore. It's just me. My thoughts are normal again. I can't think through the author's ingenious words anymore.

In the distance, I can hear my mom calling me for dinner. I get up, put my book down and start to get ready to tell everyone about this great book I've just read.

# Grade 9-10

## Dear Grandpa

*Natasha Carson, Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

Dear Grandpa,

I always wondered what it was like in heaven;  
As a child, mother told me you passed  
and became an angel,  
And though these words travelled  
without a second thought,  
I knew that death won the battle,  
but life triumphed in the war.

Mother says you were the best father,  
A man purest of dedication and responsibility.  
She tells me you worked  
with great valor and conviction,  
And never ceased to expose her  
to a world captivated by imagination.

She remembers the weekends  
you would go out for a decadent gelato  
at the little Italian shop beside the corner store;  
She says  
"There was not one time I frowned those days,  
the sun blasted me with heat  
and I loved it anyways."

Mother also misses your tender embrace,  
You were her Papa bear  
and she was your baby bear.  
Your daughter, she continues to look up to you;  
It is my mother, who is inspired by you.

Grandmother says you were the best husband,  
A spouse who caressed her  
with unconditional care and affection.  
She tells me you loved with honesty and fidelity,  
And always encouraged her  
to express her intelligent sensibility.

She remembers the first day you met,  
In a classroom cuddled by exotic greenery  
and stuffed with heavy air.  
She says "Every time I close my eyes  
I still dream of him,  
and smile like a foolish monkey  
at an animal's gym."

Grandmother also misses your butterfly kisses,  
You were her Prince  
and she was your Princess,  
Your wife, she longs to see you;  
It is my grandmother,  
who will never stop loving you.

I say you are the best grandfather,  
A man precisely sketched  
through the grey and white gradients  
of photographs.  
Though I have not met you,  
my eyes and ears capture a familiarity,  
But today I know you;  
Today, I am your granddaughter.

## I am From the Musical Instruments

*Brianna Quan, Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

I am from the musical instruments  
that play harmony to those in the audience.  
The ascending and descending scales  
make for a playful influence.  
The melodies that fill the air,  
do so with a bit of flair.  
I am from the sound of music  
like the yellow canaries  
singing and fluttering their wings in a hurry.

I am from the guitar  
that has fingers strumming through  
the strings of nylon and metal.  
I am unlike the keys of the piano  
which are black and white, not yellow.  
I am the one who enjoys the tunes  
that are coming out  
of the speakers around me.  
I am the one who knows  
music makes me happy.

I am from the dynamic tempos  
with the ups and downs of crescendos.  
The staff filled with notes, sharps and flats  
that make the next movement  
of a new piece chat.  
I hear the flow of the harmonies as  
I enter a relaxing world of songs  
Who ever thought that loving music  
could be so strong?  
New compositions  
begin the next chapter in me.  
I am from the musical instruments.

## The Missing Link

*Lilyan Jia, Burnaby North Secondary*

I wonder what it would be like,  
to live in a place,  
where there would be enough stars,  
to slip away,  
in endless counting.

Sometimes,  
I like to think that constellations,  
exist here, on earth too,  
just instead of stars,  
it's us.

A composition of people,  
like,  
a network of veins,  
a web of rivers,  
a series of constellations.

Lines intersecting,  
overlapping,  
forming links,  
creating bonds,  
crossing paths.

But with the crisscross of links,  
there will always be ones that don't.

Ones where the lines run,  
side by side,  
but don't meet,  
it's people you wish to talk to,  
but you keep deferring.

It's the situation where,  
you think about reaching out,  
but at the last second,  
you pull back,  
and remain fixed into place.

Even stars move,  
in their own unique orbits,  
around their part of the galaxy,  
they move,  
even if you can't see it.

Sooner or later,  
you're going to realize,  
that it's too late,  
because the expanse has gotten,  
too far apart to cross.

And now you are caught  
in a parallel.  
Don't miss out on any opportunity  
to converge and link,  
because nothing is worse,  
than missing out on something,  
that could be so much more.

## The Teenage Years

*Emma T. Wong, Burnaby North Secondary*

When the voices outside  
Become so unbearably loud  
When the names they call you  
Feel like the truth  
When everything they say  
Makes you question yourself

You never knew how deep  
Words could cut  
They bring a whole new meaning  
To the cliché nursery rhyme  
You've heard so many times before

But it's true what they say  
Things will get better  
It'll all be okay  
Your world will be brighter  
The sadness will fade

One day you'll look back to these teenage years  
And realize how foolish you were  
You will always be grateful  
That you never gave up  
Even when surviving seemed impossible

## Une Identité Disparue

*Vivian Nguyen, École Cariboo Hill Secondaire*

Vos cheveux sont redressés,  
vos dents non-alignées sont cachées et  
votre rire irrégulier est supprimé.  
Vos qualités son « corrigées. »

Vous avez une culture a bondonnée,  
une garde-robe altérée et  
un régime alimentaire ajusté.  
Vous êtes un clone de quelqu'un d'autre.

Vos meilleurs amis sont remplacés,  
vos intérêts sont perdus,  
votre personnalité est « améliorée ».  
Votre identité a disparu.

## Damaged Goods

*Emma Karlsen  
Burnaby North Secondary*

Damaged Goods  
 stuck in our own self-centered circles  
 like records we spin,  
     desperately trying to make something  
         do something  
             achieve something  
                 be something  
 consumed by a never-ending want for more.  
 wasted from our dreams of  
     impeccability and perfection  
 wishing to be better than yesterday  
     but only getting tired  
         getting anxious  
             getting lost.  
 we're damaged goods but still we endure  
     hopelessly moving from one place  
         to the next  
             to the next  
 waiting for the day  
     we can finally  
 stand still.

## Le Musicien

*Tomas Lang  
École Alpha Secondaire*

Il n'y a personne qui me connaît comme toi,  
 Qui connaît chaque courbe de ma forme.  
 Quand tu me tiens mon corps répond  
 avec la musique,  
 Tes mains me conduisent dans chaque mélodie,  
 Tes doigts, des papillons  
 qui dansent en haut puis en bas.  
 Quand tu me tiens, ta tête proche de la mienne,  
 Les cous un à côté de l'autre,  
 les corps mêlés ensemble,  
 Je chante.  
 Après une heure ou deux, t'es fatigué  
 Mais je viens de commencer.  
 Une autre fois, tu me mets  
 dans ma prison et m'oublie.  
 Comme je n'avais jamais existé,  
 tu continues ta vie.

Chaque seconde passe comme une minute,  
 Chaque minute, une heure,  
 Chaque heure, l'éternité.  
 Pendant cette éternité, je me tourne les chevilles,  
 Attendant dans le noir jusqu'au moment glorieux  
 Que tu te souviens et me fais chanter encore.  
 Quand tu me libères de ma prison,  
 T'es fâché que je ne sois pas accordée.  
 Mais tu n'en connais pas la moitié.

Monsieur le musicien, pourquoi suis-je  
 dans les ténèbres de ton cœur?

**Maiden of the Night***Melissa Fong, Alpha Secondary*

Only when,  
The black lace of the moon  
Cascades down the pavement  
Through the gutter  
And trickles along rooftops dancing across  
Its unblemished light  
Surrendering to the sun rise  
Only when,  
The frost of December  
Kisses the dessert night  
And covers the sand with iridescent powder  
And illuminates dusk  
With the colors of the north  
Only if,  
She touches the ground  
And sheets of ice scatter beneath her feet  
Clinging on to the frozen soil  
And she walks on glass  
In solitude  
Only when,  
Life is invisible  
Death is unimaginable  
And time is invincible  
When only morning is what is feared  
And the days fire burns through  
A dense forest of night  
And only when,  
Someone will be crowned

**A Bad Habit***Daisy Chung, Alpha Secondary*

The beast you captured  
Is wild  
I told you but you  
Would not listen  
You wanted to stand like  
A mighty beast tamer  
And to control it with  
Blows of your stick

Hear me,  
You must not try  
To domesticate the  
Wild  
For now, you may be  
The master and the lord  
But the beast will grow

Until the time comes  
When the beast becomes  
The master  
To tame you in return  
A bad habit is a beast  
That you cannot tame

**Uncertainty Amongst Unreasonable Promises***Kate Olivares, Cariboo Hill Secondary*

How will you know  
When you're in love?  
Are you meant to hear  
Spontaneous melodies  
Each time your match appears?  
Is there a mathematical formula  
For the butterflies that are supposed  
To flutter in your gut?  
Does an arrow  
Really puncture your chest?

Or do you just take  
Each breath intake,  
Chewed fingernail,  
Stolen glance,  
Minute of hidden admiration  
And choose to let it  
Fill you whole like a helium balloon  
Rising higher and higher  
Reaching for the sun  
Until breaking into pieces?

## Up is Where You See

*Ceci Deng, Burnaby North Secondary*

Accusations, rumours, break-ups, drama,  
complication,  
like a strong mist suffocating my brain,  
bringing me down, down, down,  
down, where I can see no longer.

I take a hike,  
I don't know where.  
Just keep climbing up,  
that's all I care.  
With every step,  
along the way,  
my troubles grow dull,  
then, they fade.

Dewy crisp, refreshing,  
the mountainous air fills my lungs  
and I find myself tingling  
with a new found thrill of excitement.

The higher I go, the more alive I feel.  
I am finally unleashed, unchained, untied,  
unbreakable.  
So, I keep going,  
now no longer falling, but soaring up, up, up.  
into and past the clouds.

Taller than any stack of homework,  
higher than any towering skyscraper.

I stop and look down,  
not because of fear,  
but to see what I've left behind.  
My vision clarified,  
like someone finally put a pair of glasses on me.

The large, intertwining city of Vancouver  
did not seem so perplexing  
but like a neat, clear layout of a labyrinth.  
And my once tangled problems have unravelled  
and become less knotty and confusing.

Up here, everything is simple.  
My grey skies melted away into blue,  
my world finally opened up  
to allow light to shine,  
and one by one, worries grew fainter,  
dwindled, and ceased to exist.

Now, as I watch the sun,  
slowly, creeping lower beneath the horizons,  
dousing everything in a glorious golden glow  
I realize I should get going.

But never again,  
will I let those arms of complexity  
drag me down  
into their dark, pitless hole,  
drowning me,  
blinding me.

I WILL find a way to stay afloat,  
because now I know;  
It is up where you can see.

## Hanging with the Stars

*Angela Wang, Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

The brilliant night sky seeped into my groggy eyes  
as the yellow tarp of my makeshift tent fell away.  
I had forgotten how startling the stars can be.

Tentatively, I make my way out  
onto my little shelf of the colossal rock wall.  
Stretching out the sleep inside of me,  
I think back to the crumbling of rock and gravel  
under my callused feet.

The bright constellations above  
glint like the cliff hooks swinging  
on weak footholds.  
I think to all the times I caught  
a glimpse of death on my way up,  
How my heart raced as I clung onto a single rope,  
not even seeing  
where I'd fall through the clouds.

Yet, with legs dangling off the edge,  
the stars dissolve into the rising sun  
I lose myself into that blazing ball of radiance  
I never quite seemed to understand.

And as valleys cut through the landscape  
with each new beam of light,  
I pack my tent up and continue on the newly lit face  
of the immense cliff, glinting in the sun.

## Summer and Winter

*Sarah Derasp, Cariboo Hill Secondary*

Summer always was the loved one.  
Unruly black hair,  
She ran across fields  
of vibrant green and dying yellow  
In purple dresses laced with memory  
A crown of flowers upon her head.

As her laugh harmonized with the chirping crickets  
and barking dogs,  
She climbed trees without shoes,  
Swam ruthlessly without fear,  
She received praise upon praise  
For her continued growth.  
She always managed to climb higher  
Swim farther  
Win another heart  
With her winning smile  
And vintage dresses.

Summer always was the loved one,  
Even in her fits of rage.  
Her burning glare would kill all your crops  
You so carefully sowed.  
But you would waste no tears over your loss,  
Instead you would turn to her  
And love her gently until her gaze softened  
You would find a way to hold onto Summer  
After she destroyed you.

She prides herself on being different;  
Her music, obscure,  
Her sport, not so common,  
Her clothes reflect her state of mind  
Her room is a kaleidoscope of her soul.  
She always manages to be on the top  
Despite her continued apathy  
Continually receiving praise  
For what, I never know.

Summer always was the loved one,  
Of young and old and in between  
Nothing she did could ever be wrong  
No grudge against her ever held  
She held your hand as you stood up for the leap  
And let go as you fell.

Winter always was second best  
Frizzy brown hair,  
She tiptoed over cold gray and harsh black  
In hand-me-down skirts of little appeal  
A pair of taped-up glasses upon her head.

As her shouts clashed with the roaring cars  
and cellphone buzzes  
She followed rules without thinking  
Learned judgement without knowledge  
She received critique upon critique  
For her lack of growth  
She never managed to reach the top  
Exponentially grow  
Find another broken heart  
With her crooked smile  
And faded jeans.

Winter always was second best,  
Worse in her fits of rage.  
Her stormy skies were laughed at,  
Met with hatred and hiding.  
You'd waste no tears over your loss,  
Instead you would turn to her  
And laugh as she cried snowflakes and ice  
She'd hurt no one but herself  
As you all waited for the snow to melt.

She always tried to fit in  
Her music, generic  
Her sport, the same.  
Her clothes reflect what others wear  
Her room a vacant abyss.  
She always managed to almost win  
Despite her continued effort  
Continually receiving insults  
For what, I never know.

Winter always was second best,  
At anything she ever did  
Nothing she did was ever good enough  
No forgiveness for her you could ever find  
She held your hand as you stood up for the leap,  
And fell as you flew.

## **A Book**

**Geoffrey Lau**

***Burnaby Mountain Secondary***

A book with all its chapters,  
Some of which are not filled.  
The part you only see  
Is the cover.

The cover is filled with sunshine,  
With glistening streams and beautiful birds.  
You only think of the how simple it is.  
And you think you know what it's about.  
But you never look inside.

But behind lies pages darker.  
The book, judged by the front.  
You put it down, but you will  
Never see what lies  
Within the chapters.

The pages are filled with dark and grime.  
If you look deeper, there is a heavy heart.  
But between those, there is still light  
A mind, like sunshine, bright  
However, those papers cannot last  
and the book is filled with bright darkness again.

This book is quite an adventure  
It takes a different perspective to understand  
A simple brain wouldn't figure it out, only a  
complex heart could  
Comprehend a living book that couldn't be  
Just a book.

## **Mes derniers moments**

***Safiya Dina, École Cariboo Hill Secondaire***

Le soleil était trop brillant aujourd'hui. Autour de moi, les arbres étaient pauvres, même avec le gazon, qui était une belle couleur de vert depuis trois ans. La terre était trop chauffée, alors personne n'était dehors. Je suis resté à côté de ma petite maison, pas sûr de bouger or de rester dans cette place. Je me suis reposé contre le mur extérieur de ma maison, avec mes jambes allongées devant moi. J'étais dans cette position pour presque une semaine. Sans nourriture et avec très peu d'eau. Je n'ai pas bougé; pas quand ma mère est morte depuis sept jours, pas quand mon père est mort depuis cinq jours ni pas quand mon petit frère, qui a seulement l'âge de six ans, est mort depuis deux jours. Je suis resté comme ça depuis l'annonce de la mort de ma mère à cause de la famine et la pénurie d'eau dans notre petit village. C'était la même raison que mon père, mon frère, ma mère et presque trois tiers de notre village sont tous morts et je savais que je suis prochain à mourir. Je savais que La Mort va visiter cette petite maison dans quelques heures.

J'ai essayé de penser d'une façon plus positive. J'avais seulement 12 ans. Dans ce village, c'est difficile de survivre jusqu'à l'âge de 10 ans, à cause des problèmes environnementaux, des problèmes climatiques, l'effort de trouver la nourriture mangeable et le grand manque d'eau douce. Mes parents étaient chanceux. Ils étaient en vie jusqu'à l'âge 35 ans. J'ai pensé à propos de toutes les choses que mes parents m'ont donné, même si nous n'avions pas beaucoup d'argent. J'ai reçu de l'amour, de la nourriture, un petit frère et la vie. Puis, j'ai pensé à propos de mes amis. Ils étaient tous morts à ce point. Je n'ai pas d'énergie maintenant. La famine m'affecte gravement. J'ai trop soif. J'ai dépassé l'étape où mon estomac grogne pour la nourriture. Je n'ai pas de sensation, j'étais insensible. Mes battements de cœur ont diminué beaucoup. Mes yeux voulaient fermer et je savais que dans quelques courtes minutes, je vais voir ma famille et mes amis.

J'ai fermé mes yeux pour la dernière fois.



## Finally Free

Tess Abad  
Cariboo Hill Secondary

It's pitch black. The temperature surrounding me is hot, very hot. My heart rate increases in anticipation. Today is the day that I escape.

Too much time has passed by. I've been held here for months and should have left over a week ago, but at the time I didn't feel fully prepared and decided to linger for a bit longer. At this point, though, it's now or never.

As a result of my sense of sight being nonexistent, I feel around blindly with my curled fingers for a way out. It's slow work, but suddenly I notice an opening. A faint light emits from it. I know for certain that that's where I'm supposed to turn. I shift around until I'm facing it and then carefully make my way towards it.

Lurching forward with all the strength I have, I slowly advance out of the dark space, but I still can't see anything. Claustrophobia begins to settle in as the walls feel like they're closing in around me, and I instinctively continue moving faster like my life depends on it. Incidentally, it actually does. My strength increases as if some invisible force wills it.

I hear shouts in the distance, which causes me to freeze for a moment. I hesitate to go any further. *Is this really the right time to do this?* I question. The uncertainty of the timing of my leaving returns, and I sit and contemplate this for a while. I can still hear the shouting, which doesn't exactly help my thoughts.

Eventually, logic takes over. It's more than just my desire to leave. I have a significant *need* to leave. I push all doubts out of my mind. *If you don't leave now, you will most likely die*, I remind myself. I resume pushing forward, refusing to give up. My exit route is very small, but I am determined to persevere. Time is of the essence. The temperature is slowly rising with each passing second.

Before I even know it, I've actually made it outside. *Free, I'm finally free!* I take my first breath of fresh, cool air, and in my excitement I end up coughing it out instead of exhaling normally. Then I hear a woman's voice. She sounds like she's crying, and I answer her with cries of my own.

"Congratulations, it's a girl!"

I hear more sobbing from the woman. Then I hear her speak, her voice trembling.

"May I hold her?"

And then I'm in her arms, protected by a soft, fuzzy material and her loving warmth. I open my eyes for the first time and look into the face of someone who cannot be anyone else but my mother. The sight of her makes me swell with happiness, and my tiny lips curve up in a small smile. I see tears slowly streaming down her face, but she gently smiles back at me, her eyes twinkling.

"Welcome to the world, darling."

## Winter Solstice

*Tsehai Harris*  
*Cariboo Hill Secondary*

"Do you ever wake up to realize your life is meaningless?" she said.

"What?" I replied

I stared hard at her. A blank expression plagued her face as she stared out at the falling snow.

"I don't know." She started "It's just a thought. I mean, I guess I'm just bored with doing the same mundane tasks over and over. Going to the same places and seeing the same faces. I want adventure back..." She stopped abruptly, as if she had told me too much.

I remember the days when riding on my shoulders while we went to the post office was an adventure for her. I remember how her blue eyes were full of life, a direct reflection of the Caribbean Sea. Of course, that was before The Incident, and the move. How many years ago was that? Seven, eight? How old is she now?

"Sweetheart," I began, choosing my words very carefully. "you know, err... y-you know your mother and I love you, very much."

She turned to face me, but stared past me as if I weren't there. Her eyes locked on a panoramic photograph of Chicago that slouched in a cracked red frame. I noticed a sparkle on her nose. A piercing? How long had she had that?

"Dad, when's the last time we had a conversation? A real one." Her words came out as soft whispers, like the wind whistling through trees at the dead of night.

"Your birthday." I said confidently

She looked at me in dismay.

"No, Dad." She said. "That was a 5 minute call."

A blanket of ignominy fell on top of me. I broke my gaze, and scanned her bedroom. The bed was unmade, as always. Her sheets bunched up in mountains of cotton. The blue of her walls was almost an exact match to the blue of her irises. Not the Caribbean blue, of course. The new, lifeless blue that had invaded her eyes. And it was my fault entirely.

"Yes." I said "I do wake up to realize that my life is meaningless."

The corners of her mouth curled up into a smile.

"Does it give you strength, or drive you to your grave at an early age?" she replied.

I didn't know how to digest her smile. Before I could reply she got up, grabbed her phone from off the windowsill, and with a flip of her blond mane she was gone.

## **L'Orage Spectaculaire**

*Vivian Nguyen*

*École Cariboo Hill Secondaire*

Le public rit, sourit, et pleure lorsqu'ils écoutent le spectacle de la grande fierté de la famille, André, tandis qu'ils me tolèrent. La terre tremble lorsqu'André joue l'accord mineur pour commencer le prochain mouvement de la chanson. La lumière devient plus brillante et dirige de plus en plus vers lui alors que la chanson progresse. Les larmes dans les yeux de mes parents deviennent de plus en plus apparentes chaque seconde qui passe.

Le mois dernier, notre père nous a demandé de jouer le duo de piano pour la réunion de la famille. Il a voulu que je joue l'harmonie sans ornement tandis que mon frère joue la mélodie exquise. J'avais le droit de refuser et ordonner un rôle plus prononcé, mais je savais que j'étais l'ombre qui suit la personne principale partout. Je n'ai pas eu la chance de causer les professeurs à pleurer avec les arpèges délicats ou de serrer la main du directeur adjoint de l'université de musique la plus prestigieuse de l'état comme André. Je n'ai même pas eu la chance de serrer les mains contentes de mes parents.

« Joue plus silencieusement Sophie! » Mon père a crié au moment où il nous a entendus pratiquer, « Sophie, tu es le vent qui siffle doucement, et André, tu es la chute d'eau qui gronde! »

Au fur que je joue l'harmonie simple et discrète, j'écoute la mélodie enjouée que mon frère produit. Même s'il joue du piano seulement, j'entends les cloches timides qui sonnent. J'entends l'éclair faible qui frappe le sol. J'entends les ondes légères de la rivière. Le son est agréable, mais quelconque.

C'est ma tâche pour animer la chanson sourde, n'est-ce pas? Je suis une tempête; je dois forcer les cloches à vibrer pour que leur son puisse se répandre plus rapidement. Je dois produire le son du tonnerre pour l'éclairer. Je dois pousser les ondes frêles à devenir un tsunami. C'est à moi de produire un orage.

Je commence à jouer plus fortement. Mon harmonie impressionnante complète sa mélodie influente. Nos bras lourds amènent une musique qui prend contrôle de l'air de la salle. Nos parties de la chanson se disputent, mais collaborent en même temps. Après que nous finissons notre chanson, j'observe la suite. La salle tremble autant et les personnes commencent à saisir leurs chaises. La lumière éclaire sur nous deux, pas juste André. Un orage s'est produit dans la salle. Le vent a poussé ma famille de ses chaises à leurs pieds. La pluie tombe lourdement des yeux de l'audience. Le tonnerre est produit avec le marmonnement d'incrédulité. Cependant, l'orage calme lorsque mon père monte l'étage et nous embrasse.

« Je suis fier d'être votre père. » Il dit à mon frère et moi à mesure qu'un arc-en-ciel touchant les bouts de la salle se forme.

# Grades 11-12

## The Normal that is Later

*Kaya Kurz, Alpha Secondary*

My friend and I spend nights  
puzzling about the  
abnormality of existence  
Like how bumblebees  
have hairs on their eyes  
and how weird it would be  
if humans did

Or how koalas  
are constantly high off eucalyptus,  
and does it really count as high  
if you're like that all the time?

Manatees have vocal chords  
even though they don't have ears  
And mantis shrimp can see  
a whole other spectrum of colour

But humans are the strangest of them all

We try to level our oddities  
and evolve towards an established norm,  
erasing something as simple  
as writing  
with the wrong hand

And it would be tolerable if it stopped  
with bell schedules and uniforms,  
But it doesn't.

We try and normalize  
love,  
Hurling phrases like  
"people like you don't belong here"  
"people like you can't work here"  
"people like you can't get married"

Society carries an arsenal of words  
used to protect  
the stagnant frame of mind

And even though  
things are getting better,  
people are still ostracized  
because their hearts don't look like  
Valentines,  
and their love can't be found  
in any dictionary  
but maybe love shouldn't be defined

maybe love can't

maybe in our quest to figure things out  
we left behind the idea  
that not everything needs  
an explanation

And the Strange that is now  
Could be the Normal that is later.

## Le Soleil Esseulé

*Christophe Sanchez  
École Moscrop Secondaire*

C'est en me couchant que je me lève  
Je dis au revoir à l'Ouest  
Et bonjour à l'Est  
Mon travail est interminable  
Pourtant ils me prennent pour un flemmard  
L'Ouest, l'Est et le Nord

Ils disent que je suis somnolent  
Car je suis toujours endormi  
Mais c'est eux qui frissonnent  
Et moi qui reste au chaud ici  
Derrière un rideau de nuage  
Haut dans le ciel, seul et délaissé

Je brille avec une passion  
Fier, fort et intouchable  
Au centre de l'azur  
Mais quand l'aiguille touche douze  
Je sais que c'est mon temps  
De partir d'ici, en me couchant

La Noirceur éclairée s'approche  
Emportant ses amies dans le ciel  
Elles m'entourent en se moquant de moi  
Et m'arrachent le trône  
Je leur dis que je reviendrai demain  
Mais le ciel éclate de rires

« Nous aussi »

## The Tenacious Dandelion

*Breyden Chong*  
*Burnaby North Secondary*

Undeveloped, but ambitious  
 The benevolent bud  
 Rests delicately by the few green blades  
 Shrouded in a lone, abandoned field.

Dawn breaks as the finish of winter  
 Ceases to a premature spring.  
 The young floret takes its first awaited stretch  
 Towards the shimmering sun.  
 Its thin petals lay unfurled  
 Sporting a brilliant golden hue,  
 Each original and unlike.

A fellow bumblebee  
 Zigzags midway through the air,  
 Only to take a small breather  
 Above the yellow crown in full bloom.  
 Positioned fixed for a brief moment,  
 The insect flies casually off into the distance.

Through the passing of time,  
 The colder weather looms closer  
 As the once vibrant petals retreat  
 Hesitantly towards its center.  
 Gradually withering down to its core,  
 Its flimsy leaves begin to curl inward.

The stem droops flaccid to its side,  
 Slowly revealing its age  
 Through the presence of lifeless grey.  
 A subtle seed head blossoms  
 Possessing a fine featherlike quality.  
 Now a shadow of its once lustrous days,  
 It remains fragile and clinging onto life.

It is the tranquil sway from the light breeze,  
 That complements this transformation,  
 Only to be soon  
 Liberated by the wind  
 Like graceful transparent parachutes.  
 Thus spreading their newborn seedlings,  
 For generations to come.

## Stage Fright

*Kimberly Hoskins*  
*Burnaby North Secondary*

R  
 I  
 S  
 E

Make my way onstage  
 Stare steadily at the blinding sunlight.  
 Face the audience.  
 Smile.  
 Speak.

Ifetheclaustrophobiakickin.  
 Myrestrictedvoiceboxceases.  
 Nosound.  
 Panicensues.  
 Whatisbeingsaid  
 Wheredoesitbegin

Humiliation

Mumblingsumblingstuttering  
 Trippingoverwords  
 Astheyresistmymind  
 Wheredoesitend

Regret

Havingagreedtothis  
 Placingmyselfinthisposition  
 Notbeingabletosay

No

Control.

Relax.

Put on the façade until the curtain

F  
 A  
 L  
 L  
 S

## Men of Business

*Janice Lew*

*Alpha Secondary*

He enters inconspicuously,  
Settling down on a velvet cushioned seat.  
On the pristine tablecloth,  
A flimsy placard engraved in gold:  
His name.

Reflected off each red wine glass,  
A black-suited figure:  
For company.

In the myriad of faces,  
Tight-lipped smiles spewed  
Fragments of financial jargon.  
Like shards of spoken word grenades,  
A ceaseless bombardment.  
Between themselves and Silence:  
An animosity.

Agitated,  
He fidgets with his napkin  
In sync with the undulations of frivolous chatter.  
Enough.  
He rises and drifts out into the empty corridor.

The glimpse of a Renaissance painting  
Hanging idly beside the polished French doors,  
Kindles a deep desire:  
To conduct the shades of life  
with sweeping strokes  
From brushes once familiar  
To the paint-stained hands of his youth.  
A tantalizing waltz of hues.

Art bought no bread,  
They had said.  
So he turned away,  
Joined them:  
Men of business.

Nearby,  
The melodious strumming of a harp  
Reverberated hollowly in his chest.  
And the plucked strings sent  
Notes plummeting like tiny droplets of rain.

Raising his palms to his cheeks,  
There was:  
A gentle dampness that rolled off his fingertips.

## Waltz

*Amelia Earhart*

*Burnaby Central Secondary*

Small fires silently hovered  
atop flowers, warm and withered.  
Brought the fated heat they met  
and waltzed; swirled one silhouette.  
Little whispered secrets that hid  
between hushed lips-all confided.

As dances that deepened the night  
the whirling of a lovely light  
glimmered against bright laughter  
and mirth; embers trailed after  
soft petals that tumbled-landed.  
Quiet fingers kissed through soft sand.

Once laced in darling harmony  
the wind played a symphony.  
Sepals of mauve flared throughout,  
and surged; swift rains without  
doused red flames and the great fervor  
intensified ardour further.

Sundered; two lovers flew sadly  
beyond a zeal that gradually  
turned into great affection.  
Simplistic perfection  
the visionary went and lied.  
Cold corpse-a wistful fairy died.

## Variation on Donne's Holy Sonnet X

*Elisa Colasurdo, Alpha Secondary*

Cancer be not proud, though some have called you  
Deadly and mysterious, but you aren't so,  
For those who fear you fear a battle slow.  
We can sicken you as you sicken us through  
When you have been caught in your sneaky debut.  
For in this case the champion of war will go  
Not to you, but to your strengthened foe  
Who teaches others to defeat the weakened you.  
You are slave to cells, chance, genes and fate  
And with drugs and radiation to the body, rebel;  
Poor health and diet can make us sick as well  
But you can't seize us, for Death is your bait.  
A battle won or lost; either way,  
Cancer shall be no more; Cancer goes away

## There's Nothing to Write About

*Suzie Xie, Burnaby North Secondary*

you can't write poems about oxygen.  
 there is nothing to take note of about the way  
 it sustains our lungs  
 and keeps our own beings from self-destructing,  
 nor the way it precludes the earth  
 from crumbling beneath our feet.  
 there is nothing ethereal about the way  
 it perpetually engulfs us whole,  
 gently, as we breathe in its essence.  
 day by day, it fills us, it runs in our blood  
 but who are we to take notice of this  
 and write poetry in its name?

there is nothing to write about oxygen.

you can't write poems about typewriters.  
 there is nothing romantic about the way  
 you sit in front of one for hours  
 bleeding your soul into it,  
 nor the way it translates the terrible voices  
 in your head at night onto paper.  
 there is nothing magical  
 about the way words appear  
 with just a swift touch of a key,  
 or its enticing ability to voice the words  
 you're too afraid to say yourself  
 in the form of unintended subtext in literature.

there is nothing to write about typewriters.

you can't write poems about old shoes.  
 there is nothing to be revered about the way  
 they've carried us as far as we've walked in life,  
 through rain and mud, striving to go on,  
 nor the way they've provided shelter for our feet all  
 year round.

there is nothing disheartening about the way  
 they're easily forgotten,  
 as they can be just as so easily replaced,  
 but who would have thought  
 to compare themselves to old shoes?  
 you probably wouldn't.

there is nothing to write about old shoes.

you can't write poems about scars.  
 there is nothing nostalgic about the way  
 it serves as a lasting reminder  
 of the fierce battles you've lost against yourself,  
 nor the way it takes you back to the time you fell  
 literally, for the boy next door  
 with the skateboard and blue hair.  
 the scrapes and cuts  
 from attempts to impress healed over time,  
 but those were nothing  
 compared to the scar he later left on your heart.  
 there is nothing worth writing  
 about the dots and lines  
 that make up the little imperfections  
 on your body,  
 because who would care to listen  
 to the profound stories  
 you have hidden beneath your skin anyways?  
 there is nothing to write about....

## Stonestruck

*Jeffrey Chen, Alpha Secondary*

The stone appeared out of nowhere  
 plunging into the depths of a small still pond  
 as she appeared before me, enchanting as the fey.

She dove into my life in every way  
 and turned me into a stuttering fool.

The waves from the stone's impact  
 came and changed my concept of beauty  
 and my perception of the world around me.

I was stuck in this hopeless stage  
 as the waves continued to ripple.

When the stone reached the bottom  
 the myriad of waves receded and vanished  
 leaving behind a still surface.

But nothing would ever be the same again  
 for the stone still resides inside the pond.

## The Teutoburg Forest

*Luka Patek, Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

This cold, dark dreary land  
Holds the bones of Romans, hand in hand  
The struggle to survive  
And remain alive

In the Teutoburg Forest

The long lasting glory of Rome  
Will not reach the Germans home  
For united they stand  
To defend their land

In the Teutoburg Forest

The ills of varus revealed to all  
The legions of Rome begin to fall  
Shattering of shields, the throwing of spears  
The wives, gentle flowing tears

In the Teutoburg Forest

The banners fall onto the blood stained mud  
Warrior hearts beating: Thud, thud, thud, thud  
Swords reflecting the fires glare  
Into the abyss the Romans stare

In the Teutoburg Forest

All along the column they attacked  
The lines struggling to stay compact  
Blood and guts falling to the floor  
Arminius has shut the door

In the Teutoburg Forest

Their numbers beginning to fall fast  
Their flanks being harassed  
They try to fall back  
But the Germans still attack

In the Teutoburg Forest

The crimson eagle standard matches  
The Blood of Romans, falling in patches  
Varus, his pride on the line  
Knows no help will come from the divine

In the Teutoburg Forest

His shame becoming too much to bear  
Trying to return to the eagle's lair  
But there's nowhere to hide  
With Arminius playing Jekyll and Hyde

In the Teutoburg Forest

Desperate to escape the German horde  
He commits the act of falling on his sword  
His body will still remain  
A reminder of the lost campaign  
In the Teutoburg Forest

## Yesterday's Tomorrow

*Sarah Savić Kallesøe, Byrne Creek Secondary*

Through human eyes we see time pass,  
our children growing much too fast.  
Our grasp of time without a grip,  
through our fingers we feel it slip.

Hours fly by, minutes drag on,  
live the present before it's gone.  
Collect the moments of Right Now,  
and store them where they're safe and sound.

But as time continues to pass,  
those instants never seem to last.

Memories begin to alter,  
Hopes for the day start to falter.  
Today there is nothing to lose,  
the joy of life was last year's news.

Strangled dreams dug up from the past,  
crawl from the shadows trying to gasp.  
Unburied regrets take to their rise,  
leading your future to its demise.

Your plans for tomorrow crumble,  
and life is not worth the trouble,  
when thoughtless decisions take control.  
and consequences are at the toll.

So plan for the future,  
and live for the present,  
but hold onto the past.

Take our word for it;  
we used to be  
yesterday's hope  
for tomorrow.



# L'enfance Indicible

Allan Wan, École Moscrop Secondaire

## I1

Était un garçon unique, isolé avec une autre famille  
 Adopté du résultat d'une partie d'abandon et deux parties d'incuries  
 Le petit résidu de ce qui restait de sa vie  
 pris de ses parents par une vague de tragédie  
 Au-delà, il est tombé dans un abîme  
 La lueur de l'Espoir disparaissait avec l'Estime  
 Parce que chaque heure du jour et chaque minute de l'heure  
 Devenaient le produit de ses antidépresseurs  
 Qui dessinaient les points où il restait à l'intérieur  
 D'un grand jeu de les points incessants  
 Et après tout ce que le garçon a subi dans son enfance  
 Il ne saura jamais la raison de son existence  
 Parce que tout ce que la société ne lui a jamais permis  
 C'était de saisir son nom : la BiZzArle

## Elle

Était une poupée, cabossée par les aînés  
 La cible de la haine et l'aimant de l'animosité  
 Connue pour ses cheveux laids et sa tête défigurée  
 Elle avait douze ans quand ils ont dit « méfiez vous de Méduse »  
 Et malgré ses larmes coulantes, personne ne voyait cet abus  
 Sauf le garçon,  
 qui voyait aussi sa beauté  
 Parce qu'il voyait son cœur avant sa tête  
 Et même avec ça il pensait que ses cheveux valaient plus qu'une auréole d'un ange

Mais ses pensées solitaires n'étaient jamais entendues  
 Car elles étaient meurtries par les chuchotements d'insultes  
 Qui se multipliaient à un autre jour comme une statue  
 Et le vidage d'un corps fondu  
 De toute la douleur qui n'a jamais disparu

Mais en huitième année  
 Ils ont finalement trouvé la paix  
 Parce qu'ils pouvaient dessiner leurs propres points  
 Sans avoir besoin de les relier  
 Et les noms qu'on leur a donnés sont devenus le bruit de fond  
 Qui n'aurait plus de place dans leur propre monde  
 Qui disparaissait dans le vent sans qu'ils l'entendent

Et même si leurs vies seront toujours une question d'équilibre  
 C'est devenu un acte de deux personnes  
 Qui pourraient finalement tenir l'un l'autre  
 Loin des analgésiques, Au-dessus de toutes les insultes,  
 Et autour des épaules de tous les autres opprimés  
 Qui avaient une enfance indicible

## One More Lesson

*Kenneth Chan  
Burnaby North Secondary*

The wind blew harshly against my face as I approached the elementary school that I used to call my second home. It brought back nostalgia as I walked through the quiet hallway. Muffled noises were emitted from classrooms as teachers prepared to clean up after a hard day at work. I approached the leaf-green door and gently knocked. The door was shortly opened and I was greeted with a familiar face.

"Mr. James!" I greeted the man.

"Luke! You've come back to visit!"

"Yep, can you fetch Mrs. Louis for me?" I asked.

"Sure! I'll be right back." And just like that, he disappeared behind the door.

I studied the hallway quietly as it brought back memories. The times when we had to line up like dominos and the worst crime was being a "budger." One poster that was stapled against the hallway had caught my eye. It was a picture of a rainbow, subtitled with "It's not a choice." Those words took me back five years ago when I had discovered -- no, realized something that would change the course of my life forever.

I was relaxed. As the heat of the water massaged my body, yet my mind was far from relaxed. I remembered my legs began to shake with fury and my pale lips quivered as I forced myself to whisper something I did not want to admit.

"I'm gay," I slowly stuttered. The stutter turned into a quiet sob and the quiet sob soon turned into anger and confusion. I had more questions that I wasn't ready to answer.

I was brought back to the present as I felt a tap on my shoulders.

"Are you okay, Luke?" said a familiar female voice.

I looked up and realized it was Mrs. Louis; she looked pretty as she always was, but she had gotten older as her hair was starting to grey and the lines on her face had become more obvious.

"I've been doing well... but I have something to tell you." I felt my voice crack as I said those words, Mrs. Louis's smile was replaced with concern.

"Is everything alright? Luke?"

"No." I cried. My legs were obviously trembling as I tried to build the courage. "Forgive me, as I've never told anyone before -- but I'm gay." The moment I had said it, something inside of me broke. I wasn't sure if it was a sound of liberation or doom. "I thought you needed to know. You gave me my passion for acting and you've taught me so much more about life." I finished, waiting for her reply.

I noticed her eyes had grown red with tears as she pulled me in for a hug. "Let me teach you one more lesson then. You can never please everyone. Those who matter will stay, and those who don't will leave." Before I knew it, I could taste the bittersweet taste of my tears. "And I'm staying Luke."

## **A Lot of Luck**

**Sabrina Echegaray**  
**Burnaby Mountain Secondary**

"This is the path I used to take to school." My father gestured to a mossy path cut through the Andes bush, littered with decaying leaves. The trail was high in the mountains, and I had the entire lush green valley in my view. Walking through, we reached an aging building. It must have been quaint in its time, but now it was tired and abandoned.

Encircled by crumbling plaster walls that must have been 8 feet high at least, we stopped to admire the building. "My old house. The one we lived in while your grandfather was alive." My father explained. We pushed the wooden gates open, and stepped inside. I'd never seen anything that looked so old, and so deserted. Cobblestone lined the interior, and a few stray chickens clucked around.

He pointed up a stone stairway built into the wall "I used to sleep up in the rafters. I remember when we got a radio; it was huge, but I'd lug it up there and listen to music all day. I was the happiest boy on earth then." My father smiled to himself, reminiscing forgotten times. I felt guilt creep up into the back of my 9 year old brain. I'd been begging my mother to let me bring my Nintendo. I had wanted to be the only kid in town with a shiny, flashy toy; to create envy, to have children wanting to play with *my* game.

I turned to the right, through a doorway and into a dark room. *This must have been the kitchen*, I thought to myself. A rusted water basin stood lonely by the one window with cracked panes, and the walls were blackened with soot and time. There was no fridge, no granite countertops, and no stainless steel appliances.

"Sabrina? It's time to go." My dad called me, breaking my train of thought. I ran back, scared to see anything more I wouldn't like. As we exited the abandoned building, I heard laughter down the road. A few children were running barefoot, playing with a dog. Their little bellies protruded from their too-small clothes, and dirty faces peered up at me when they realized I was watching them.

"Sabrina! We have to get back to town!" My dad repeated, exasperated. He began to walk back, expecting me to come running.

I reached into my backpack pulling out all the candy I had brought, having originally intended to devour it myself. "Wait!" I called back. The children's eyes widened at the sight of these strange, brightly wrapped Canadian goodies.

I dumped all of the treats into the children's hands "Here, here, take this..." I could almost feel a weight coming off of me, the guilt slowly receding.

They stared at me, unsure. But they peeled the wrappers off, and began to eat, chattering amongst themselves. I ran off before they could ask any questions.

I finally caught up to him, panting all the way.

"Dad?"

"Yes?" Leaves crunched underfoot.

"We're really lucky, aren't we?"

"We are. We really are."

## **Corrupt Discipline**

*Sever Topan, Burnaby South Secondary*

The sun is high, its rays presenting what is sure to be a fine day. In its promising light, a thief seeks the council of a colleague in the field, "Brother, would you care to impart some wisdom of our common trade in this hour of aridity?"

"But of course, friend," replies the criminal, "There are but three laws to which a thief of prominent calibre must adhere in order to ensure prosperity."

As the pair walk along, the mentor pickpockets an elderly man. Holding the stolen trinket up to the thief, he instructs, "The first is amorality: an individual appertaining to our profession cannot allow his resolve to be hindered by the whims of ethics."

Wisps of cloud adorn the sky, casting a hazy patchwork of shade upon the city.

The mentor leads the thief through the town, and tosses the trinket onto the ground. A beggar reaches for the discarded trinket, and in doing so, causes an unsuspecting lady to stumble over his outstretched body. The lady's purse falls from her grasp and the contents are scattered, much to the alarm of the surrounding city folk. Amidst the ensuing confusion, the mentor expertly snatches the wallet from among the dispersed items, effectively augmenting his stolen estate. "The second is resourcefulness: we thieves must adapt and utilize all that we can in order to attain our desires."

The corridors through which they roam become dilapidated as they delve into the core of an old part of the city. The wisdom of age shows through the unshaven plaster of the surrounding walls. These buildings have seen things.

The mentor makes a turn and comes to a door. "Now, the final principle," he utters as he opens the door and leads his pupil into what appears to be a modest interior.

Soon the pupil realizes they are not alone. He hears the door close behind him, and darkness drowns the room. The pupil puts a hand on his coin purse. He sees something malicious in the mentor's gaze. "When you're a thief," preaches the mentor, as heavy things are heard shuffling while the shadows stir, "there are no rules."

## **A Global Sentiment**

*Andrea Figueroa, Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

They say that the Earth was a reflection of the mind of the king and the temperament of the people. When they were content, the land was lush, beauteous and fertile. When they were distraught, storms would ensue and the sea would be tumultuous. However, observing these symptoms of their despondency, the people would alter their disposition accordingly; until the day when animosity slit an enormous crevice in the Earth.

Legend says that long ago, the people were amalgamated by one benevolent king. When his cherished queen died, he was left to care for his infant son, and incapable of meeting the obligations of fatherhood and kingship, he took another wife, who likewise had a son. Although the first prince was the only one of veritable royal lineage, the king treasured them both and treated them equally. The brothers however, appeared to have an abhorrence for each other that was etched in their very skin. Even as children, there was an incessant turbulence between the two, and none of the king's endeavors to reconcile them prevailed. By the time they were young adults, their disparities had caused many irrevocable spiteful actions.

Eventually, the illegitimate prince requested to inherit the crown, dreading his brother's wrath after his subsequent ascent to the throne. The king was aggravated and rendered irresolute by his identical love for his sons, so he proclaimed that they would elect who would become king themselves, in a conciliatory, peaceful manner. However, in their relationship, the brothers demonstrated no diplomacy, and decided that a fatal duel was the sole alternative. At daybreak, they entered the middle of the city, and began to cross swords. Hearing the disturbance, numerous people came to watch. Throughout their lives, the princes had established alliances, and everyone in the tribe had a favored prince.

The king was notified of the combat, and ran out to end it, stricken with the fright of a probable assassination. Both brothers still lived, but were so absorbed in their battle that they could not hear their father's plea for armistice, only the people's cries for retribution. In desperation, the king cast himself between them, just as they were to deliver the death blow. Too late they recognized they were about to slay their kind father, and not their nemesis. Confounded, they could only stand there as the king's blood dripped into the Earth.

This atrocious slaughter of an innocent held too much anguish in the princes' hearts, and the Earth split, clean in two, the brothers plummeted into the rift, and the people became perpetually divided. Despite the horrendousness of this calamity, the people felt no culpability in goading for bloodshed, so although integrity faded, hatred remained, slinking into their minds rendering them cold and bitter, because they did not let themselves comprehend the depth of their loss. The Earth grew dry, drought overcame the land, and the people were driven away, breaking into small groups, and they maintained a vagabond existence in all corners of the world.

## **Mens Rea**

*Sarah Hardjowasito, Moscrop Secondary*

We were scrawny and not much taller than mailboxes when we dragged our gritty fingers through the fresh-laid cement of the new sidewalk just a few blocks away from our street, close enough for us to walk by and admire our mischief on future occasions, but out of the way enough that no one could trace the work back to us. The August afternoon hung down in a thick tangle, like our damp linens did when we took them out of the dryer too soon, and acted as our invisibility cloak that kept prying eyes away from us and our activities.

He was shaggy-haired and careful to keep the cement off his shorts, knowing that any such slip would not only mean incriminating evidence of our extra-curricular exploits, but also instant death from our respective mothers for making a mess of our clothes. I was paranoid of discovery, but his sly grin was the gavel that overruled my objections, and he swirled his finger carefully with artistic flourish. By the time the owner of the corner store, the sidewalk in front of which we had just defaced, came racing out, we were already halfway down the block, sprinting and laughing while he threw curse words after us like Molotov Cocktails.

We were the secret terror of the neighbourhood, running a profitable licorice ring for the kids whose mothers swore that the Devil spun sugar as a hobby, conducting raids on the unblemished canvasses of public property, and facing off in an aggressive cold war with Mr. Chesney's cat. He was shaggy-haired and I was anxious, and, together, we were unstoppable.

We were taller than mailboxes when he introduced me to some friends. We all shared a love of certain activities, and since he thought it was a good idea, I held no initial objections to our business union. We had matured past licorice rings, and our work reflected this. I always had an eye over my shoulder and doubt in my mind, but he would just laugh at my worry and give me the same dopey grin that silenced discussion. Our eyes were weighted with smudged charcoal crescents, and the metal piece I kept under my pillow made my neck stiff, and made me feel like I was nestled up to a ticking time bomb.

I had to stoop to duck under the roof of the cruiser, with the officer's icy hand clamped roughly on my neck. The cuffs were cool, like the cement of the sidewalk had been when it had hardened, immortalizing our amateur masterpiece. His blood had misted onto my jeans when they'd shot him, and he'd rolled like an ocean wave in a crescendo of bullets, with the ghost of a grin slipping from his face. As the alternating red and blue splashed through the window, and the ringing in my ears deadened the wail of the cruiser, all I could think was, *How had it come to this?*

## Paper Boats

*Christina Crivici, Burnaby North Secondary*

The frail bones in his body clambered together as I grabbed him the knitted blanket that was placed beside me. It was February - each blade of grass seemed wet with the sun's reflection. My head swung around towards the window as, just like each blade of grass that was once dry, I felt a rush of water meet the surface of my eyes. Each moment spent with Nonno was incredibly special.

"Christie," he mumbled, the soft-spoken word left his dry lips as my head whipped around to meet his pain-filled eyes, "watch with me." The sounds of metal thrashing against a voice that howled, met my ears - he was watching wrestling. These little moments meant the most to me.

Next to his IV there was a paper boat. Its smooth surface and sharp edges made his hands raw from all the times he had shown me day after day how to make them - and I still couldn't master it. The delicate layer that framed his veins was so translucent you could almost see the blood pumping through them steadily. The slightest agitation could throw it all off. "Nonno!" I yelled as he couldn't hear very well. "Can you show me?" He must have been able to read my mind because he knew exactly what I was talking about. He lifted his arm as his fingers curled around the napkin that rested on his tray. His fingers weaved back and forth as he commanded the paper square with ease. A few seconds later came the perfect boat.

"You should know how to do this by now." He murmured slowly, admiring the folded napkin.

"I know, I'm sorry." I answered quietly, guilty I wasn't able to do it. In fact, I enjoyed moments like these when he shared his knowledge with me, and in the back of my mind I knew there wouldn't be many left. I could feel my throat tighten as it swelled immediately. "I'll be right back Nonno, I just need to go to the washroom," I said as I carried myself out the door. "I love you."

Gently he reminded me, "I love you too, Cri."

My feet raced me to the washroom and I admired his calm demeanor, how he was in immense pain but still managed to enlighten me with his knowledge. He was a fighter.

Before I could wipe my tears, BAM-panic struck outside the door. Wheels screeched against the cold linoleum floor while feet scrambled. Nurses frantically raced each other down the hall, hospital beds squeaked as they were pushed. "Room 107," I overheard a nurse shout. Blood rushed to my head and as I took a step my heart skipped a beat. Nonno. My feet slammed into the ground and I could feel beads of sweat dripping from my hands. It felt like there was a spell over the open space of his room; I was frozen in time, staring at a blank room where my grandfather, just moments ago, lay. Memories flashed in front of my eyes and all I could hear was the sound of his voice. I was too late.

As my body melted into the safety of the couch, another nurse walked my way. "He was holding this, I thought it was for you," she assumed, acknowledging the tiny, transformed napkin. It was as if a thousand bolts pinned my body to the cushion once my clammy hand tried to reach for the little boat in her hands. "I'm so sorry." She whispered. The nurse gave me a moment to myself and swiftly walked out the door. It seemed so easy when she did it.

Thin and fragile but strong enough to stay standing, it reminded me of him. "I promise I'll learn Nonno, I promise. I'll fight too." I whispered to myself half-heartedly, my eyes wet and vacant. My hands guided the delicate memory into the untouched, safety of my pocket. I wished this was what I could do with all of my memories of him.

# First Impressions

*Karl Ding, Burnaby North Secondary*

As I entered these doors, the sight of Hilda's smile welcomed me. She smiled from her usual position on the couch — patiently waiting, her eyes twinkling with merriment — and I smiled back.

\* \* \*

When I first met Hilda, I'd just entered the sliding doors that separated *them* from *us*. Those doors opened, revealing a deserted common room — save for a plump, elderly woman. Her body visibly straightened as she noted my arrival from her seat in the leather couch. This was Hilda. I felt her intense gaze upon my back. I strode towards the young receptionist for assistance. It unnerved me.

Flustered, the receptionist shuffled papers strewn across her desk in vain to assist me.

Suddenly, I heard a soft voice behind me.

"Son, are you the violinist?" I nodded. *Clearly*, this woman hadn't seen the violin case I held.

"You're late. I've been looking forward to meeting you." she exclaimed, with a touch of annoyance. "I'm so glad you're finally here."

I bit back a cry of complaint that naturally arose within me, as I noticed her obvious fascination with what my hands grasped. A violin and music stand.

"Great, it's this way," she happily remarked, interrupting my train of thought. "There's someone you should meet."

I politely took her offered hand in mine. Her hands were maps of veins and wrinkles — of roads I had yet to travel, of stories I had yet to hear. Mine were lightly calloused after hours of practice.

I followed her into a dimly lit room. The door softly closed behind me, shrouding the small room in darkness.

Hilda explained that this resident, her older sister, couldn't face any light without pain. I watched, awkwardly, as Hilda softly whispered. Eagerly, they sat — Hilda on the worn chair beside the bed, and Elizabeth, propped against a mountain of pillows. The stillness was suffocating me.

So I began.

As I played, tears began cascading down their twin, shining faces. Their shaking hands gripped each other tightly, as both women wept — with tears not of sadness, but of joy. To my amazement, their joy slowly became my joy as we became caught in a chorus of "Danny Boy" that enveloped the entire residential area in its warmth.

Others stopped to listen, but I kept playing. I continued, for I could not stop. At that moment, time seemed to come to a standstill, until it was over all too soon.

Moments passed. Eternity seemed to pass. No words were spoken. I bowed my head in embarrassment. Doubts flew within my mind. *Did I play too loudly? Did they not like the music I'd chosen?* Finally she looked up, and through a curtain of tears, whispered, "Son you have a gift. It's wonderful that you won't let it be wasted." And that was the moment I knew.

\* \* \*

As I walked towards Hilda, surrendering myself to her embrace, she smiled and said, "There's someone you should meet." This time, I happily agreed, as we walked down the long corridor. Together.

## Adelaide

*Coleen de Guzman, Cariboo Hill Secondary*

It was midnight and all was quiet. A man wandered the dark streets of the village, staggering, a half-empty bottle in his hand. Adelaide, he thought. Oh how I long to meet you, my Adelaide. He stared at the vigilant figure standing over his village. He huddled in his great-coat, and ducked inside a shabby building.

In the morning, children ran about, dragging their mothers inside a candy store or perhaps a toy-shop. Tourists roamed the streets, finally stopping at the statue's feet.

"What lovely silver eyes!" One of the tourists said.

"Such dainty and petite ankles," said another.

Women and men flocked around the statue admiring its godlike demeanour. Women yearned to be utterly like her, slender, beautiful, and perfect.

She was created to show beauty and pride. And that was how she stayed. She enjoyed the people's attention.

Throughout the first few years she stood over the village, she found pleasure. The sculptor would visit her every day, walking all the way down from the village square up to the hill. He brought a bouquet of cloves and acacia flowers every time he visited with a note that she would never get to read. He would replace the flowers he had brought with a fresh batch on the next day.

Decades had passed and the sculptor stopped visiting. However, every day, there would be a fully bloomed red rose at her feet.

After a while, the roses too stopped coming, along with the most of the travellers.

Adelaide, magnificent and regal Adelaide, was not as solid as her iron pedestal.

The statue stood atop the hill slowly eroding.

One night, when her marble skin started to whittle, she wished with all her heart and soul that she could, even just for one night, visit the sculptor.

She closed her eyes and envisioned herself walking, down the hill, along the streets and alleys, clutching the rose in her hand.

A loud crash brought her back to reality. She turned around and saw a man, staggering on his feet across the street. To his left was a café; she gazed at the café windows and saw her own reflection.

It came true, she thought.

The man wobbled towards the old building where she was standing, and fumbled in his pocket for his keys. He looked up, his clouded mind cleared, to find himself in front of the woman. The woman he had sent roses to every day until reality crushed his hopeful heart.

"You are the most beautiful person I've ever seen. And I love you," the man said clutching his hands tightly together.

"I am a statue. I do not love nor am I deserving of love."

"I know what you are and it doesn't matter. What matters is that I have loved you from the very first moment I laid eyes on you in my father's studio. And to this day I still do.

"Grant me this, my Adelaide. Learn to love. Love is what made you, and love will keep you here," he said staring at her scarred skin.

"Love is the universal language. Speak it, and you will understand."



# Community & Continuing Education

## Amusing Incident in a Tragic Circumstance

*Betty Louie, South Burnaby Education Centre*

Can you imagine something very funny happening when you are drowning in agony? The whole story took place in a Macau hospital. A wrong description and a wrong room number caused my silly story.

One day, in 1991, I received a long distance call from my maiden family. They brought me tragic news: my grandma was critically ill, and it probably would be my last chance seeing my dear granny!

After hanging up my phone, I found my brain was not functioning. I was completely lost. I couldn't remember how did I come to the travel agent's counter; all I knew was I needed a ticket to Macau as soon as possible. I heard the agent ask my home phone number. Ironically, no matter how hard I tried to recall my memories, my phone number didn't come out. My mind was blank.

It was the longest trip I've ever had. By the time I arrived in Macau, my elder brother gave me a warning: "you'd better be prepared that you may not be able to recognize grandma. Her illness dramatically changed her appearance. Then, my younger brother came and told me grandma's room number. Without any waiting, I darted to that room. I saw an old lady lying on the bed soundly asleep.

*Oh! Grandma really doesn't look like grandma anymore. . .* I painfully held back my tears and shook her lightly:

"Grandma, it's me Betty! I came back from Canada to see you!"

She gradually opened her eyes and looked at me closely:

"Who's Betty? Who are you?"

My heart sank.

"How can you forget me? I am the one you love the most." I hugged her tightly, and my tears began pouring.

All of a sudden, I heard some weird giggling from outside the patient room. I caught a glimpse of my elder brother who was secretly waving at me with a queer expression.

Leaving the questioning old lady behind, my brothers burst with laughter. They led me to room 112 instead of 121. I finally saw my grandma! Thank God! Grandma was still my grandma! Although she was much thinner, she still looked the same to me.

After hearing the whole story, granny laughed so hard, her stomach was sore. It was her last laugh. Three weeks later, she passed away.

To conclude, that clumsy mistake made me become a big joke in my family. Although I'd blamed my brothers' wrong information, I must admit my irrational action was also a factor in performing such an ironic comedy. Anyhow, I am still glad that I could make my grandma have her last laugh, at the end of her life.



# Rotary Club of Burnaby

The Rotary Club of Burnaby, would like to congratulate all those who participated in Burnaby School District's WORDS Writing Project. Improving literacy is an important goal of Rotary. The club has been a proud supporter of this project since 1995.

The Rotary Club of Burnaby works towards making a difference in the lives of those in its community. In this endeavour, the club supports a number of local initiatives that include:

- Bursaries for each of Burnaby School District's secondary schools
- Lunch programs for children
- Rotary Youth Leadership Award
- Adventure programs in citizenship, film, forestry & environment, technology and tourism
- Rotary Organized Adolescent Retreat (ROAR) that provides leadership development to a student from each of Burnaby's elementary schools
- And much more...

**You too can make a difference. Come join us!**

**Come out to one of our Friday luncheon meetings.**

**For more Information:  
[www.RotaryBurnaby.org](http://www.RotaryBurnaby.org)**



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