

# Words Move Us



*"This image represents how literature can take the reader on a journey... the windows show a glimpse into what the reader is experiencing..."*

~ Cover art by Sherry Fang  
Grade 11, Burnaby Central 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.

Since 1985/86 the WORDS Writing Project has encouraged Burnaby students, from kindergarten to grade 12, 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 children to do their very best, and generous community sponsors who are committed to supporting youth and literacy.

We are proud to present you with "Words Move Us," this year's limited edition anthology of student poetry and prose. It features a collection of 97 selected works by the best student writers in the District. As the title suggests, this anthology is filled with words that will move you, whether they are transporting you to new places – or touching your soul with their heartfelt emotion.

Congratulations to the students who have been selected to be a part of this project. We encourage you to nurture your writing talents. Who knows where your words will "move you" in the years to come. What we do know is that you will continue to make us proud of Burnaby Schools.



Ron  
Burton  
Chair



Harman  
Pandher  
Vice-Chair



Katrina  
Chen



Meiling  
Chia



Larry  
Hayes



Baljinder  
Narang



Gary  
Wong



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**WORDS WRITING PROJECT**  
**2014/15 ANTHOLOGY**

**Words Move Us**



# WORDS WRITING PROJECT ANTHOLOGY 2014/15

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

*To ensure the Burnaby School District does not contravene legal or copyright considerations,  
students published in this anthology and their parents/guardians have signed letters of authenticity  
to confirm 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.*

# 2014/15 ANTHOLOGY

## Words Move Us

### Ages 5-7

#### My First Tooth

*Vanesa Al-Abboudi*  
*Buckingham Elementary*

I lost my first tooth on Christmas.  
It caused a lot of pain.  
I was crying.  
I lost it when I was 5.  
I have lost 4 teeth.  
At night it fell out and  
I put it in an envelope that  
Says, "tooth fairy."  
The next day I got \$10!

#### Gold Nuggets

*Mabell Mathews*  
*Buckingham Elementary*

Have you ever struck it rich?  
A gold nugget sure is worth a lot!  
It's as rare as a diamond,  
As precious as a wedding ring.  
As smooth as glass,  
As shiny as the shimmer of the sun.  
I wish I could find one in my stream.

### Mes souliers magiques!

*Katharine Doerksen*  
*École Inman Élémentaire*

Katharine à des souliers magique!

Qu'est-ce que tu penses ses souliers vont faire à Katharine? Toutes les réponses sont dans le livre!

Un matin en été, dans une petite ville, il vivait une petite fille qui s'appelle Katharine. Elle était polie, intelligente et jolie.

Elle voulait porter les mêmes souliers chaque jour parce que ses autres souliers étaient trop vieux.

Mais, un matin d'été, les souliers de Katharine ont couru dans la forêt tout seul! Les souliers de Katharine ont fait ça parce que les souliers voulaient que Katharine porte ses autres souliers aussi. J'ai des souliers magique crie Katharine. Alors, Katharine a décidé de créer un piège avec des cordes, des bâtons, et de la colle! En premier, elle a collé les cordes ensemble et dernier, et le a mis les bâtons en haut. Finalement, les souliers ont dit «désoler » à Katharine et Katharine peut porter ses souliers magiques tous les jours!

# Ages 8-10

## Humanity

*Eshan Barha,  
Buckingham Elementary*

Humanity needs to be harmonized  
Like the dark red roses and pale blue skies

Like musical notes woven into a song  
That makes everyone feel like they belong

Because they do.

And I'm telling you this  
Because humanity is not perfect the way that it is

But we can work together  
and make something better  
For me, for you, for us all, for whomever!

Because each is important for all of our race  
Regardless of skin colour, fashion or face

And if our collaboration succeeds  
Humanity will meet each person's needs

We will be happy and achieve more things  
Just like an eagle with outreached wings!

## Colours

*Isobel Chatterton,  
Buckingham Elementary*

Red is the flame that flickers bold

Orange is the wonder of stories to be told

Yellow is the sun with greetings so warm

Green is the colour when flowers are born

Blue is the colour of sky and woe

Purple is the heather blowing to and fro

Pink are the blossoms out to the sun

Brown is the colour when leaves are done

Black is the night sky so endless and wide

White is the colour of morning light's pride.

## It's Fall

*Charlize Escobar  
Morley Elementary*

I look outside my bedroom window  
It is pouring rain

*Pit pat*

The wind snaps off the leaves of the branches  
Red, orange and yellow swirling down to the ground

*Swoosh*

The sky is filled with grayish clouds  
A draft of cold wind enters  
the small opening of the window  
From downstairs I can smell the aroma  
of my grandma's apple pie

*Ahhhhh*

I tip-toe down the stairs  
and am handed a cup of hot cocoa  
I take another peek outside  
I slowly sip the hot cocoa  
And take a deep breath  
There is no doubt about it

It's Fall.

## Performing

*Samantha Garcea  
Parkcrest Elementary*

Spinning in the air

My ponytail whipping around

Feeling eyes on me.



## Life of a Pit Pony

*Teodora Ostojic*

*Taylor Park Elementary*

I, a sturdy pit pony am all they need.  
Sometimes I feel like I'm their mighty steed.  
I work in the mines that are dusty and cold.  
It feels like I'm working in a smelly old mold.

Me, yes me, I carry thick chippy coal.  
Miners create such incredible holes.  
Every time I go into that cough ridden mine.  
I think of couplets that seriously rhyme.

Mines make my skin shutter and jump.  
Then the coal slips from my shovel and it goes thump.  
An explosion! Frantically they run for their dear lives.  
Faster than the buzzing bees from their hives.

Then I neigh my crinkles out.  
I then run off with no doubt.  
Off I go to my safer stable.  
To see awaits my carrot on the table.

Another day slowly passes by.  
I think about the miners who sadly die.  
I finally go to sleep and shut my eyes.  
The darkness continues to fill the morning sunrise.

## Much Further Than a Thought

*Maral Tabarmanaf*

*Chaffey-Burke Elementary*

First it was little,  
Clear, salty drops  
Next it was a dream  
About my thought. A thought filled with sorrows,  
A thought filled with no care,  
a thought that I wish I could grab  
And tear. This thought showed me how  
Cruel the people of this world can be  
But I need to forgive and  
Live in peace.

## Opposites

*Floria Gu*

*Capitol Hill Elementary*

What is the opposite of imagination?  
Perhaps it's a soul lacking inspiration.  
Because imagination can take you anywhere,  
Take the time today, to travel somewhere.  
What is the opposite of creation?  
Perhaps it's restrained ideas without a means of  
Recreation.  
Because creation is imagination made real,  
Take time to try, the result will always appeal.  
What is the opposite of innovation?  
Perhaps it's a mind with no aim of creation.  
Because innovation can change the world,  
Try it, your creativeness will have fully unfurled.

## Cariboo Trail

*Ryan Liu*

*Buckingham Elementary*

Have you ever heard of a place  
That miners have to face?  
They have to avoid obstacles  
and dangerous objects.  
Why pass the place?  
Because if they survive  
They can strike it rich!  
The place is  
As long as the Great Wall of China,  
As deadly as a feasting shark,  
As frozen as a giant iceberg,  
As narrow as an evergreen's bark,  
As muddy as a swamp,  
And as gloomy as a cave in the dark.  
It is the Cariboo Trail!

## I Am From

Madelyn Wilson  
Windsor Elementary

**I am from** my grandparent's house of loving aunts, uncles and eager cousins. Board games, family dinners and albums of old pictures.

**I am from** a house of foods, from, potato salad to dinner rolls. Delicious cookies lighting little faces. Sweet Jell-O squares snatched and plates of cheesecake licked clean.

**I am from** a cabin warm and cozy. Cuddling up by the hot fireplace telling stories, with soft blanket fortresses, and playing in waist deep snow that shimmers in the bright winter sun.

**I am from** a house of flowing music and loud video games. Piles of chapter books, each has a great story to tell and walls of paintings that make you smile.

**I am from** a neighborhood of friends, each one gifted in a special way. Weekends of plan and fun all day with lemonade stands, snow cones and popsicles.

**I am from** a part of a friend's heart and homemade treehouses in the park. Walking through the cold creek while sneaking through old hidden places with a best friend.

**I am from** a school of running competitions on dry ground. Secrets, friends and fun on snowy winter days with red cheeks and noses with moods and feelings changing every which way.

**I am from** a place of high mountains covered with colorful, ever changing trees. Beautiful bright sunsets painted with oranges, reds and yellows that light up the skies.

**This is where I live, learn, hope and dream.  
What more do I need?**

## Dancing Leaves

Emma West  
Morley Elementary

Gentle leaves fall through the sky  
Dancing in the wind as they fly by  
Drifting down to the cold hard ground  
Children crunching the leaves they have found.

## Si j'étais le vent

Patrick Handra  
École Marlborough Élémentaire

Si j'étais le vent,  
Je soufflerais les feuilles d'automne  
Pour ranger et nettoyer les jardins.  
Je pousserais les nuages  
Pour apporter le soleil et faire le ciel brillant.

Si j'étais le vent,  
Je sécherais le linge, les rideaux et les draps de lit.  
J'aiderais les enfants  
A aller plus haut sur les balançoires.  
Je ne soufflerais jamais sur le feu qui brule dans les forêts  
Pour protéger la nature.

Si j'étais le vent,  
Je soufflerais toutes les maladies de la terre  
Et je les jetterais dans la mer.

Si j'étais le vent,  
Je serais gentil avec l'environnement  
Afin que nous vivions heureux finalement.

Si j'étais le vent ...

## Winter Forest

Ella Tani  
Kitchener Elementary

The snow covered all the ground.  
Only the trees now could be seen.  
A caribou runs to its home.  
As the predator's eyes are keen.  
The wolverine comes to now hunt.  
It just sees snow in the cold sky.  
Then there's a rustle in the bush.  
Now it's dark, let it pass by.  
At night a wolf walks through the trees.  
Its fur is so clean and pure white.  
The snow tries to block her vision.  
As she howls lonely in the night.

## Shanghai

*Hannah Zhou, Taylor Park Elementary*

Shanghai is one of the biggest cities,  
If you can't go oh, such a pity!

There are always busy streets day and night,  
The lights are dazzling at dark, what a sight.

I know a restaurant called, "Eat Your Souls"  
Try the hot, crisp, crunching, oily spring rolls.

Summer the temperatures so high  
it melts plastic wastes,  
Stores show off their beverages  
with spectacular tastes.

The Science World there  
connects to what we're learning like an aim,  
Take a ride on the fantastic  
human skeletal system train.

Look at the Wiggly Bugs Hotel to see,  
Rare insects and reptiles -  
don't drop the door key!

A place with fossils, animal facts, sea world  
and olden day cars,  
It's the Nature Museum,  
go visit it even though it's far.

All the people in malls  
are like tiny dots from the top,  
As big as a hotel I don't want to fall with a drop.

Showing friendliness is important  
as there are abandoned pets,  
Caring and feeding them  
they'll actually show some respect.

Shanghai World Financial Center,  
the world's second tallest building, really high,  
Its lights mark its place as it shimmers  
wondrously in the night sky.

Now the spirit is not shopping for extra pants,  
2015 they might finish the new Disneyland.

This trip I had gave me one important thought,  
A family and friends reunion would be really hot!

## Une Tempête

*Sabine McLellan, École Brantford Élémentaire*

Quand le vent souffle fort,  
Et la pluie vient très vite du ciel,  
Et le soleil jamais brille,  
Tu entends le tonnerre et vois les éclairs,  
Et tu te caches en dessous de ton lit avec  
Les peluches, et les couvertures de ton lit,

Et très doucement tu dis,  
« Je ne sors pas d'ici. »  
Mais quand ça arrête,  
Tu vois le soleil,  
Et tu es heureuse encore.

## If I Were a Snowflake

*Vincent Gao*

*Seaforth Elementary*

If I were a snowflake, I would be a six-pointed, frosty star. The wind would sweep me from places to places, playing tag with my snowflake friends. I would see all the children joyfully playing with us, making us into snowmen with a pointed carrot nose and charcoal eyes. My friends would glide in the chilly winter air with me, looking at the Northern Lights glistening in the cool, evening sky. I would see penguins glide on their bellies and polar bears with fluffy, white fur roaming the North Pole. Finally, the wind would lead me to Paris. As I pass by a bakery, I can smell all of the wonderful treats that the baker has made such as pies, cookies, fresh bread and cakes. I would see the Eiffel Tower standing in the dark night sky with all of the other snowflakes circling around the tower playing cheerfully with the children bundled in fur coats and wooly mittens.

Eventually, the wind would carry me to Canada, where I would melt into a puddle with my friends, finally ending my adventure. I am anxiously waiting for another cold winter day to start another fabulous adventure.

## Pourquoi les chihuahuas ont de longues oreilles?

Emma Cont

École Marlborough Élémentaire

Il y a très longtemps, avant que les humains soient là, les chihuahuas avaient de courtes oreilles. Dans la forêt il y avait un chihuahua nommé Chichi. Il était dans la lune parfois mais il était très intelligent. Un dimanche matin, il marchait pour trouver la nourriture. Tout à coup, il a vu une chose délicieuse. Chichi voulait vraiment l'avoir alors sans penser, il s'est dirigé vers la tanière des loups – Garou, Monoshe, et Pip. Chichi n'a pas vu de loups alors il pensait que c'était une tanière originale abandonnée, mais les loups étaient juste partis chercher la nourriture aussi!

Quinze secondes plus tard Monoshe, Pip et Garou sont revenus de chercher la nourriture et ils ont vu Chichi en train de voler leur os, alors ils l'ont pris par l'oreille. «Lâcher moi, sale bestiole, est-ce que tu sais que ça fait mal?» s'exprima Chichi. «Tant pis pour toi, t'as volé mon os!» cria à son tour Monoshe. «Garou» hurla Monoshe, «prend l'autre oreille!» «A ton service monsieur, Monoshe!» a répondu Garou. Les deux loups ont tiré si fort que l'oreille s'est prolongée. Mais Chichi avait une idée. Il a frappé Garou et Monoshe avec sa queue. «Ouille, ouille, ouille!!!» cria de douleur les deux loups avant de relâcher le pauvre chihuahua. «Ha, ha, ha, ha!» ria Pip. «Tu devais voir tes visages quand vous avez dit ouille!» «Ne reste pas planté là, sac à puce, attrape-le!» Mais il était trop tard. Le chihuahua était parti depuis longtemps.

Mais chaque fois que les loups sont venus pour chasser les chihuahuas, Chichi courait loin avant que les loups venaient. Comme ça il n'arrivait pas d'être mangé. Les autres se demandaient comment. Chichi toujours leur disait «c'est parce que mes oreilles sont plus longues que les tiennes et j'entends mieux». Tous les chihuahuas ne voulaient pas être mangé alors ils ont copié Chichi. Et comme ça tous les chihuahuas ont de longues oreilles.

## Do You Think It's Easy Being a Basketball?

Jimin Kim, Stoney Creek Community

So you think it's easy being a basketball. Think again. People always thunk you around – “Ouch.” People dribbling me – “Oof.” People shooting me – “Yow.” See? People are playing a torturous game of basketball right now – CRASH. And I am so unfortunate to be the playing ball. I have a family of basketballs – “Yow” – in the equipment room. Ooh, yay, it's a half-time break! That means I get a little rest. I have a tiny amount of time before I get thunked again. You see, when people get hurt they get attention and people try to make them feel better. Me? Not a chance! They don't care that I have bruises and I am covered in dust. They don't even notice! People are just so – wait a minute. Why am I getting picked up? Please don't tell me – that HALF-TIME BREAK IS OVERRRRR!!!! I'M GETTING THROWN IN THE AIRRRRR!!! AAAAHHHH! Whew, it's over! Time's up! So as I was saying, people are just ignorant and obnoxious because they don't care what they're doing to little, innocent basketballs. But the unluckiness isn't over yet. They throw me in the cold, dark equipment room and turn off the lights. Now do you think it's easy being a basketball?

## Pourquoi les arbres perdent leurs feuilles en hiver?

*Adrian Chua, École Marlborough Élémentaire*

Autre fois, il y avait une fée qui vivait dans la forêt. Elle en avait assez des arbres qui faisaient toujours des bêtises et qui parlaient toujours de leurs feuilles. L'érable disait : «Mes feuilles sont les plus colorées!». «Les miennes sont les plus belle!» ajouta le saule. Finalement, le grand chêne se vanta «que penses-tu de mes feuilles, ils donnent le plus grand abri.» Et souvent, ils se moquaient du sapin. Ils lui disaient qu'il n'était pas un arbre parce qu'il a des épines au lieu des feuilles. Mas le sapin restait calme.

La fée a eu soudain une idée pour aider le pauvre sapin. Elle voulait enseigner une leçon aux arbres et leur montrer que le sapin est spécial.

Alors, elle s'est changé en écureuil et a demandé à tous les arbres si elle pouvait construire sa maison au sommet des arbres. «Hé», disait l'érable, « Va ailleurs! Ta couleur ne va pas avec mes feuilles.» «Toi, n'arrache pas mes feuilles!» criant le saule. «Moi, je ne veux pas d'écureuils dans mes branches, je veux des oiseaux prestigieux.» ajoutait le grand chêne. Et tous les arbres ont dit non sauf le sapin. «Si mes épines ne t'ennuient pas, tu peux habiter sur mon sommet» disait le sapin. Donc quand l'écureuil a grimpé au sommet du sapin, elle s'est changé en fée et elle a dit : «Comme vous avez tous dit non, vous allez perdre toutes vos feuilles sauf le sapin qui ne perdra pas ses feuilles en hiver!» Et ça c'est pourquoi tous les arbres perdent leurs feuilles en hiver sauf le sapin.

## Never Give Up

*Candace Zhu, Chaffey-Burke Elementary*

“Aghhhh.” Emily Jacobs grunted. She wiped her muddy hands along her ripped burgundy T-shirt. Her light brown hair brushed against her tanned skin, and her dark green eyes looked around cautiously. As she sat down in the shady oak tree, away from the sun, she thought about all she had gone through. The raging rivers and the forests she trekked through made her finally think about home. And for the first time in weeks, a salty tear ran down her sunburned cheeks; the same cheeks that her mom had kissed six months ago.

She ran her hand across her cloth bag which she kept her belongings in. Mostly everything was either crooked or broken, except for her brother's coat. That coat was like family to her because her mother's broach and her father's tie were pinned on to it before the camping trip. She had told herself that she would never wear it. She wanted to protect it so it wouldn't get ripped or have anything bad happen to it. But it was cold, chilling to the bone, so she pulled the heavy coat on and walked on.

“Trudge, trudge.” Emily was hungry, very hungry, almost starving. She grabbed a berry on the nearby raspberry bush. As soon as she put it into her mouth, she spat it right out. It was bitter, just like her life. She slouched down and sat on the forest floor.

“Ughh!!!” She cried out to the lonely sky, she continued saying, “Why did it have to be me to get lost on this camping trip?”

Then she calmed herself down and said to herself, “OK, just imagine, and never give up that there will be a rescue helicopter soon, I mean it is already six months. They should know that I am missing, right? But for now I am on my own.”

The next morning as Emily woke up she thought that she heard the rolling sound of helicopter blades. Out the corner of her eye, she saw an orange helicopter above the trees. She asked herself: “Am I dreaming?” The whirling sound got louder and louder and the orange helicopter landed beside her. As her mother ran towards her and embraced her, she knew she was finally home.

## So You Think It's Easy Being a Dog?

*Kennedy Mohammed-Bolan, Stoney Creek Community School*

So you think it's easy being a dog? It's not!! And here are 18 reasons why.

1. I'm colour blind. Think about it, no colours!
2. I have to eat kibble...."Yuck!"
3. I don't have opposable thumbs so I have to pick everything up in my mouth.
4. If I even try to speak, my owners get mad at me.
5. People always think that I have to hate cats, but I like some cats.
6. I always have to be nice to everyone even if I don't like them.
7. My owners leave me behind when they go on vacation, but I want to go too.
8. I have to beg for food because humans are too stupid to learn dog language!
9. Every day, between 8:00 and 3:00, my owners are gone in a car. I love car rides, so why can't I come?
10. Every night at six, I sit under the table and hope someone drops some food for me, but all I get is broccoli! I am outraged by this insanity, but I'll keep going.
11. My humans get toilets. Even cats get little boxes. However, I have to go outside.
12. My owners say that I'm going to the park, but sometimes it's a trick and is just another vet trip.
13. Sometimes, my owners go away for years! Or is it weeks? We dogs have no concept of time.
14. At the park, my owners throw the ball for me even when I just want to take it and lie down.
15. Humans are always afraid of nothing, like monsters, so they use me as a comfort toy and humans are the only monsters I see!
16. My humans bought a cat! A cat! I mean, sure, I like cats, I won't deny that. But they got the meanest cat ever.
17. My humans always pet the cat more than me!
18. When the humans do bother to take me out, they leave me in the CAR!

Well I could go on, but I'm going to take a nap, which is the only good thing about being a dog.

## Ages 11+

### Life of a Pit Pony

*Nikolina Cirovic, Taylor Park Elementary*

I found out with sadness about your plight,  
Your life lived in perpetual night;  
An underground stable was where you roomed,  
An innocent life entombed.

You were so trusting and willing,  
You must have dreamt of fulfilling  
The wish to be back above ground,  
With green fields and trees all around.

For fifty weeks a year this was your cell,  
With hot grimy air and that putrid smell,  
Until that wonderful liberation,  
That exhilarating rising sensation.  
Of the pit cage approaching ground level,  
With you on board about to revel,  
In the freedom of the new fresh air,  
With pastures around you everywhere.  
Behold for a fortnight at ground zero,  
This doughty and unsung equine hero,  
Far from Epsom and the thoroughbred race,  
Whose life was entwined with the black coal face.



## Fear

*Jenny Liu, Inman Elementary*

I fear  
the dark.  
Not the dark that is the opposite of light,  
but the dark that sits inside of us.  
Sometimes we don't notice the dark that secretes  
inside of us even though it is there,  
every minute, every second because the kind and  
gentle side of us usually  
rules over.  
I am afraid of the things in the  
dark  
because things surged in darkness  
means that they won't ever see or find  
their way to light again.  
Unless there is someone to guide you.  
I fear  
spiders.  
Those creepy insects, balanced upon  
their nets of silk.  
Although they're  
small  
They sometimes overreact.  
We all fear  
different things  
but we're really the same;  
we all hide sooner or later.  
I know that the biggest fear that humanity has  
is OURSELVES!  
We were all put together for a reason  
and I believe that  
we need each other to charge through  
FEAR.

## Life

*Zahrah Khan, Seaforth Elementary*

Life is like a movie,  
With ups and downs,  
Happy moments, sad moments,  
Smiles and frowns.  
  
It starts off slowly,  
As we try to understand,  
Then building, spiraling,  
And so the story expands.  
  
The action begins to rise,  
And with it knowledge we acquire,  
Of future, past, and present,  
And the things we most desire.

## Si j'étais un arbre

*Alexander Hodaly  
École Marlborough Élémentaire*

Si j'étais un arbre  
Je donnerais de l'ombre les jour ensoleillés  
Je donnerais mes pommes aux animaux affamés  
J'accueillerais les oiseaux sur mes branches  
Je permettrais aux enfants de grimper sur moi  
Je me vanterais de mes belles feuilles colorées  
Si j'étais un arbre  
Je donnerais de l'oxygène à la planète  
J'aiderais les hommes perdus dans la forêt  
Je donnerais ma sève pour le sirop  
Je permettrais les gens fatigués de s'asseoir sur  
ma souche  
Je donnerais mon bois aux autochtones pour faire  
leurs pirogues  
Si j'étais un arbre ...

## Winter Wonderland

*Janice Chan  
Nelson Elementary*

Winter dawn,  
By the crackling fire,  
A soft ginger cat awakes,  
Gazing intently at falling snow,  
Fall has left.

And then it seems the best part comes,  
Happiness, glee, delight,  
Friendships built, memories made,  
Oh what a glorious sight!  
  
But life, like movies, takes us by surprise,  
Dreams shattered, hopes destroyed,  
The future seems bleak for us inside,  
We are left with tears in our eyes.  
  
What happens next, I cannot say,  
For every life goes a different way,  
The path we take, the choices we make,  
Will ultimately decide our fate.

## Jesse Jackson

*Jack Yaremko  
Chaffey-Burke Elementary*

Knew the problem,  
knew how to solve it.  
Stood up,  
when others backed down.  
When others were scared,  
he wasn't afraid.  
When he couldn't have what was rightfully his,  
he fought for it.  
His mind was strong,  
his will was stronger.  
He knew the risk,  
but took it anyways,  
Will always be remembered,  
will always be thanked,  
Changed the world  
in more ways than imaginable,  
Did more than one person  
was expected to do.  
Could be expected to do,  
Needed to do,  
Wanted to do,  
Tried to do,  
He put in effort,  
the pain for the gain.  
His experiences fuelled him  
like gas on a fire.  
Not ashamed of his past,  
The past that made him  
What  
He  
Is  
Today.

## Double-Sided

*Isabela Moise, Capitol Hill Elementary*

It beats you down, it lifts you up  
It holds you close, it shuns you out  
It hurts you, it heals you  
It is short, it is the longest thing you'll ever do  
It is molded by you, it controls you  
It is a comedy, it is a tragedy  
It is a farce, it is reality  
It is memorable, it makes you want to forget  
It is wasted, it is cherished  
It loses, and it gains  
It is the past, the present, and the future  
It is despised, it is loved  
It is disgraced, it is honoured  
It belongs to you, it belongs to me  
It can be a dream, it can be a terrible strife  
Do you know what I speak of?  
I speak of Life.

## Terror

*Shenae Meerkkerk, Clinton Elementary*

A darkness I can almost feel,  
Closing in on me,  
Trapped I am scared and alone,  
Terrified I run,  
I stumble and fall onto the rough pavement,  
I am cornered,  
I have nowhere to turn.

## Si j'étais le vent

*Adrienne Lei, École Marlborough Élémentaire*

Si j'étais le vent  
j'apporterais,  
la pluie aux endroits secs,  
la neige dans l'Artique,  
pour aider les ours polaires.  
Je soufflerais  
la nourriture aux gens sans abris et affamés,  
les jouets aux enfants pauvres,  
les graines aux endroits dénudés.

Si j'étais le vent  
j'enlèverais,  
les déchets dans l'air et sur la route,  
la pollution,  
les avions de guerre,  
les mauvaises personnes.  
Si j'étais le vent

## I Stand On The Side Lines

*Chioma Oluka, Chaffey-Burke Elementary*

I stand on the side lines looking in  
A desolate waste land, a barren land  
So little to gain from empty pleasures  
I desire more.

"We can change the world!"  
Is a statement made by many  
But hardly ever carried out,  
I demand more.

You can wish upon a star, or a penny  
But a wish is simply just a dream,  
Not reality.  
I long for more.

I see what some enjoy  
Love, enclosed with peace radiantly shining  
from above,  
A redeemed soul no longer burdened  
by the bondage of sin.  
I yearn for that.

I stand on the side lines looking in  
An empty bleak world  
With little to gain from empty pleasures,  
I ask for more.

## The Solve

*Tom Rotbart  
Nelson Elementary*

Inspection  
15 seconds  
Found what is needed  
Hands down  
3, 2, 1 begin  
Spin, spin, cross done  
Corner, edge, slot  
First two layers done  
Four are up  
Not case 1 or 2  
Case 13  
Up down left right  
Orientation complete  
Corners in place, edges not  
Middle, middle up  
Permutation done  
Throw slap check  
Rubik's cube solved  
Only 5 seconds of your life.

## Anxiety

*Astrid Norn  
South Slope Elementary*

When anxiety gets  
Inside me,

I feel like I've been  
Lost at sea

Shivers running up  
My spine,

My anxiety level is  
About 8 or 9,

I feel shaky in  
Every bone,

I never want to  
be alone,

Stomach squeezed and  
Muscles tight,

My entire body and mind filled  
With worries and fright.

## Part of Me. . . .

*Natasha Varajic, Brentwood Park Elementary*

It helps me express myself.  
It helps me to tell you why no one  
can touch the sky.

And if I'm mad or extremely sad  
it will definitely tell you why.

Even when, it makes no sound,  
it will spread my feelings all around.

It can even change the look on my face  
to tell you if that book's out of place.

*I love it.*

But sometimes I wish it had a break;

I guess I'll just have to use a piece of tape.

This *it* isn't a tree, or a book -  
it's simply part of me.

It's not my legs, hands or eyes

It's something I could never compromise.

It's the one. The only.

The beautifully chatty, without a doubt,

My mouth.

## Changing Forever

*Brian Zhang*  
*Capitol Hill Elementary*

On the surface of the winter lake,  
 Cracking, thawing, in the winter sun,  
 A change begins to occur.  
 Loosening, wobbling, and giving way  
 to the temperature,  
 The ice begins to melt,  
 Changing appearance, size, and state of matter.

The ice has changed into water,  
 A free flowing liquid,  
 Devoid of any shape, it simply moves around,  
 Quenching thirst and cleaning bodies.

Now, in the heat of summer sun,  
 The water molecules gain energy,  
 And another change occurs,  
 The water soon becomes water vapour,  
 An invisible gas that floats without hindrance  
 throughout the air.

Existing in 3 different forms naturally,  
 Water is on the boundary of separate worlds,  
 As a solid, it is ice, a solid slippery, fragile substance,  
 As a liquid, it is water, a flowing, smooth,  
 life-giving drink.

And as a gas, it is water vapour,  
 whizzing through the air,  
 Creating clouds and moisture.

3 different forms, 3 different worlds,  
 Dependent on temperature and pressure,  
 Water is constantly moving, constantly responding,  
 constantly changing.

## I am Heroin

*Emily Zhang*  
*Brentwood Park Elementary*

I am a beautiful flower used to  
 remember the dead  
 As soon as you use me.  
 I will become widespread  
 Inhale, snort even inject.  
 They all bear the same results, you'll be wrecked  
 I may be the fastest trip to being high  
 But I ruin your life, quick as an arrow  
 hitting a bull's eye  
 Inject me? Whoops, a clot in your vein  
 Clogging your lungs, affecting your brain

So you want to get rid of me, don't you?  
 No, I'm like a parasite, on your brain I will chew  
 Try me once, pleasure though you'd need space  
 Try me twice, it's me you will chase  
 You think that you can escape?  
 Well you can, but behind you I'll be  
 flowing like a cape  
 Following you wherever you go  
 Peer pressure is pretty powerful, you know

I take all your belongings away from you  
 Trust me, you won't be feeling blue  
 Sell all your collectables, limiteds,  
 your house or your soul  
 You may be happy, but I know inside  
 you'll have a hole  
 Are you sad? I'll always be there  
 Only if you submit to me, I'll become the new heir

I come in black, orange, cinnamon and brown  
 I guess you'll never know  
 that I may be in your town  
 I may be in your friend's cabinet,  
 cinnamon, brown sugar or in your spice  
 Don't eat any of the cupcakes, that's my advice  
 Will you try me? Take the dare?  
 You're the one that will come to me,  
 that's only fair.

## An Apple a Day

*Susan Chung, Windsor Elementary*

Harold Fischer would eat nothing but apples.

Yes, for three weeks he consumed solely apples and nothing else. This particular course of action was on the advice of his doctor. Doctor Mackerson, who had told him to add more fruit to his diet. To prevent scurvy, you know. Fischer didn't know oranges were best for that, but he took it to heart. Why spend money fixing his health when he could prevent it from becoming broken in the first place?

After he decided to start eating apples, Fischer started washing his hands every fifteen minutes. It had to be fifteen minutes exactly. To achieve this, he set an oven timer in each room of his house, working backwards from the bathroom so that he would be on time.

Soon Fischer stopped leaving his house. There were too many germs out in the other world. Nobody went out, and nobody came in, either. Eventually Fischer's safe area began to shrink, and by the third week of his apple binge he had locked himself in the upstairs bathroom. There he remained for three days, sitting there, his head against the cold tile as he slept at night. Against the wall, piles of red delicious apples, shiny with wax, were stacked neatly into perfect pyramids.

Finally, Fischer's sister Catherine, concerned with his lack of contact, came barging into his fortress. "Come on," she said, banging against the bathroom door, "I'm taking you to a doctor."

Fischer flung the door open and cried, "No! I won't go! I've done everything! What could I possibly need a doctor for?"

"An apple a day," quipped Catherine. "One apple, Harold. Look at you!"

He had lost thirty pounds and his skin was a disconcerting shade of apple-flesh yellow. "I'm fine," he said.

"No way. Look, Harold – I'm taking you to a psychiatrist."

"But that's for crazy people!"

His sister did not respond, but pulled him – he was too weak to resist her – through the house and into the car. A fat tear clung to the corner of his eye, then began to roll down his face. By the time the car door slammed shut, the fully grown man was heaving sobs. An apple a day had spared him no pain. Those doctors – they could never make up their minds!

## Stray

*Simran Garcha, Clinton Elementary*

My home is an alley. The solid, concrete ground supports my weight over the earth. Its rough feel reminds me of where I am, so I don't get unpromising dreams. Walls are caked with graffiti, as if someone detonated a paint bomb. The clanking of a plastic spoon accompanies the melody of the breeze over the busting traffic. Dumpsters line the wall, its stench of raw garbage doesn't irritate me anymore. A grey sedan strolls by, honking at me to move out of the way. With my scraped paws, I trot over to an isolated dumpster, the dumpster in which I scavenge for food. The blanket draped around the neck falls off. This alley reminds of whom I am, a stray, unwanted, starving dog.

I was just four months old. My comfy, warm blanket was wrapped around me, its fluffy texture made me want to snuggle in it forever. But, my restless brother kept taunting me, attempting to make me get out and play. I obliged and pursued him around the living room, the hardwood floor slick under my paws. Suddenly, a crane-like hand grabbed me and hoisted me up, its grip was secure. The living room went past in a daze, the plush furniture stayed solid to the ground. A cold hearted box was lying on the floor patiently, my cherished blanket trapped inside it. The careless hand plopped me inside the box, all I saw were shadows. That was the last day I've seen that place, and my brother.

I was terrified, not knowing my fate. I clung onto my blanket, its warmth surging through my body. The world around me started to shift, I gripped harder as I heard a car engine start, the noise terrorizing me. I could hear a bunch of cars, the honking and vrooming of engine engulfed me. All alone, I felt like nothing, as if I wasn't anywhere or anyone. Everything went to a sudden stop; I heard some clanking and the box started to get airborne, being hoisted out of the trunk. Suddenly, I saw the light of day, blinding me as if I never seen it before. I poked my tiny head out of the box, what I saw was an alley, a lonely, merciless alley, I picked up my blanket, my only pleasure, determined to keep it with me.

## Jerry

*Susan Chung, Windsor Elementary*

Every morning, the buses were parked out front by the yellow curb. I can still remember their ugly blue seats and the way that people would walk into the bellies of those buses without really looking at anything. Most of all, I remember “Good morning!” and the way it sounded rolling off his old, wet tongue. He was one of four drivers that semester, responsible for making the campus circuit every fifteen minutes. There were lines on his face, a map of his years, and white hair stuck out from beneath his driver’s cap. He introduced himself around September when the post-summer heat was still thick.

As the weeks went by, he began to talk as old people do. He didn’t reminisce or drone, but he always talked. Many times, he asked questions about me. He asked about my classes, my family, my goals. I usually exaggerated so my answers were always happy ones.

Sometimes, I would watch him talk with other students. He would smile and say Hello, and some of them would be real people and reply – but others just twitched their lips and took their seats. I hated seeing that.

One day, he gave me a magazine, told me that he had already read it, that he had the subscription, that I might like to order something from it. I was embarrassed, but I thanked him before putting the magazine in my backpack.

I began to dread seeing him. Not because he was weird or imposing, but because I am rude like everyone else. I couldn’t converse with someone for this long, this nice, this friendly. But I didn’t let him know this, I was still cheerful, more than all the others.

On October 4<sup>th</sup>, he told me Happy Birthday. I tried to be casual about it.

Guilt made me keep that magazine for more than a month, it was filled with trains, and dolls and clocks – a whole city made of paper. I can still remember the way its pages felt, they were that thin, grainy sort of quality, the kind with bold washes of color.

In November, I told him I was leaving the school. When he asked why, I said money was the reason. He said he understood, nodded like he understood.

Some people just have souls that you can wrap whole thoughts around. His was bright like that, even though, for a while, I did my best to look away. Friendliness for four months, hey – that’s more than I’m capable of.

I told myself I won’t forget his name.

## Forest of Flames

*Geetika Sharma, Clinton Elementary*

The air was thick as I struggled to inhale a large breath of air. My body was limp, sprawled out on the floor, my hands reaching to grip my abdomen, clutching my stomach in agonizing pain. I picked myself off the floor, tears streaming down my flushed, bruised cheeks. I was left to drown in my vulgar thoughts, alone, on the asphalt outside of school. Turning over, I looked up at the grey sky, wondering as to how hard it was for these beings, which punched me, kicked me, verbally harassed me, to wake up in the morning. *Would they be terrified of their reflection in the mirror?*

I groaned at the sudden strike of electric pain. It seemed to be coursing through my body, the hurt pumping in my blood. The sun disappeared behind a wall of gloomy clouds.

*“How does it feel to be depressed?”* The voices in the hallways teased me. I always felt the need to be isolated from others, finding true happiness deep in the forest, far, far away from all human contact. I was myself when I wasn’t with others, and I liked me. I pondered this question, the statement hitting the inside of my skull, looking for an answer to quench the thirst of curiosity the students I attended school with. *How did it feel to be depressed?*

It felt like I was being thrown under the truck by my best friend, or even being pushed off a bridge at extreme heights. It felt like I needed to be quiet, scream, cry, smile, vomit, and stop breathing *all at once*. It felt like I was drowning in my own body, my mind suffocating within my hollow head. My chest felt empty, missing the beating warmth that was shielded by bones and skin tissue. It felt like I was *dying*.



My mind was clouded with scarring thoughts, my fists clenching until they turned white from force. I punched a street sign in anger, screaming in absolute agony. These people, these humans who disrespected me for feeling *different*, they weren't terrified of themselves. We were terrified of *each other*. I was afraid they wouldn't accept me – it's not like they did, anyway – and they were afraid of my overly powerful anger that has swelled within me from the haunting life I've lived so far.

*"I'm going to kill you!"* The words roared inside me, frustration and shame flooding my senses. Red adrenaline blurred my vision as I found myself in the forest, my place of tranquility. I took out a lighter from my pocket, grabbing a fistful of dead grass and burning the plantation. I threw the blazing grass to the base of a tree, causing the surrounding materials to start sizzling with sparks. Smoke flew around me in a hurricane of wind. It was getting hard to breathe. If I was dying, every part of me died as well. I set my place of peace ablaze and waited for the growing flames to engulf me.

## Grade 8

### As Tests Fly

*Karen Olivares  
Cariboo Hill Secondary*

As tests fly, time does not  
Homework just seems to pile up  
When does learning become simply passing?  
It comes to a point where being smart  
is just surpassing

People like to divide  
The intelligent and idiotic  
No wonder the kids can be a little chaotic

If you get an A on a test  
And another kid fails  
Is it really their fault if they don't get into Yale?

Is the school system really fair  
When really no one cares?

As long as you get good grades,  
As long as you get into college,  
Does it really count  
As legitimate knowledge?

How is kindness and respect  
Not a real lesson,  
But square roots and machinery,  
Are always in session?

If there are thirty children all in one class  
How could you expect any of them to pass?  
With no funds, time or energy,  
Teachers are forced to always be angry

With five kids not understanding the answer,  
"It's alright!"  
It only counts on who could get it faster.

With all these systems running through a child's mind,  
How could anyone not think it's just easier  
to fall behind?

### Ashes of the Past

*Hooman Khoramshahi  
Alpha Secondary*

All of us history will outlast  
That is why we must remember our past  
For the ashes of yesterday will bear tomorrow's seed  
As history shall repeat itself  
lessons are what we need.

For poppies will always grow  
As brave and evil always show  
In our world corruption and tyranny is eternal  
As our souls are all infernal.

History shall judge  
That our demons do not budge  
But all will join the dead  
Through age or a bit of lead  
Our name written in sand  
We will bleed for our land.

The hawks watch above  
Witnessing darkness, honour, love  
But they will not learn  
It is for us to remember  
If we are to last  
The stones have been cast  
The ripples in water will come  
For the blind eternities alone to see.

## A Litany for Anonymous\*

*Samantha Loutet  
Burnaby Central Secondary*

You are the golden glow of the sun,  
As it kisses the edge of the atmosphere.  
You are the cotton candy clouds,  
Floating on magenta skies.  
You are the soft folds of my favourite blanket,  
Engulfing me in warmth.

However, you are not the dark ocean depths,  
The deep blue unknown,  
Or the vast fields of overgrown grass and weed.  
And you are certainly not the rough cliff face  
Of the angry mountain rock.  
There is just no way that you are  
the angry mountain rock.

It is possible that you are the silver moonbeam,  
Streaking glitter from my window.  
Maybe even the aroma of chocolate tea,  
Greeting me in the morning.  
But you are not even close  
To being the rancid taste of sour milk,  
Left in the fridge maybe a day too long.

And a quick look in the mirror will show  
That you are neither the graffitied walls  
of the back alley  
Nor the one shirt everyone has  
Stuffed at the back of their closet,  
Unused,  
Unwanted.

It might interest you to know,  
Speaking of the plentiful imagery of the world,  
That I am the white sandy beach  
Complete with turquoise blue water.

I also happen to be the melodic notes  
of Mozart's songs  
When the pianist's fingers fly over the keys  
in perfect harmony,  
And the colourful splash of paint on a canvas.

I am also the dusting of a first snowfall,  
Early on a crisp winter day.  
But don't worry, I'm not the golden glow of the sun.  
You are still the golden glow of the sun.  
You will always be the golden glow of the sun,  
Not to mention the cotton candy clouds which –  
somehow – float on magenta skies.

*\*Based on the poem "Litany" by Billy Collins*

## Le Nombre Exact de Planètes

*Ida Niksirat  
École Moscrop Secondaire*

Vous me dites qu'il y a seulement huit planètes dans  
notre système solaire.  
Vous me dites que la première étoile est 4.22 années  
lumière de nous.  
Vous me dites d'abandonner mes rêves de voler dans  
l'espace sans arrêt.  
Vous me le dites, mais le savez-vous?

Avec vos sciences et mathématiques, le savez-vous?

Et savez-vous que la première personne sur la lune  
n'était pas Neil Armstrong,  
C'était les milliers de personnes qui l'ont imaginée, et  
alors cela s'est passé.  
Vous me dites que les constellations étaient  
découvertes avant nous, par les adultes.  
Mais non, si vous insistez sur la logique, pensez  
logiquement.

C'était nous, les enfants, qui ont découvert les étoiles  
avec nos vœux.

Vous regardez

En haut.

Bas. En

Nous regardons toujours

## Just Because. . . . *Jarrad Banigan, Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

Just because I'm autistic.  
Doesn't mean I can't be cool.  
Doesn't mean I can't learn.  
And doesn't mean I'm weird.  
Just because I have a hard time learning new things.  
Doesn't mean I'm not smart.  
Doesn't mean I can't learn.  
And doesn't mean I always get bad grades.  
Just because, I sometimes act silly and weird  
Doesn't mean I can't have friends

Doesn't mean I always act weird.  
And doesn't mean I can't be a cool friend.  
Just because I sometimes talk weird.  
Doesn't mean I can't talk normally.  
Doesn't mean I always talk weird.  
And doesn't mean I can't talk normally.  
What would the world be without varieties of people?  
Do you know anyone with autism?  
Does it matter if someone has autism?  
Just, because I have autism.

## The Purple Fear *Sharon Yuen, Burnaby North Secondary*

"Can you see the second row?" the eye doctor asked. I was twitching, squinting, and expanding my eyes, but I just couldn't make out those measly letters. Finally, when the check-up was over and I was twiddling my thumbs, I faintly heard, "needs glasses" in the background. My eyes widened at the very thought of getting new eyeglasses, a thousand doubts and what-ifs popped in my head.

We were escorted out of the office and greeted with the doctor's assistant, and when she heard I needed glasses her lips formed a wicked grin. Finally, through innumerable pairs of glasses, my mother settled me with the ugliest one in the store. Twig-like frames, round like Harry Potter's own, and in the most unsightly shade purple I had ever seen, but of course I had no say in which one I wanted, so I tried it on. Praying that I didn't look as nerdy as I thought I would, I glanced at the mirror, and sure enough, with my own expression staring back at me, I was overcome with horror at the ghastly spectacle.

Nevertheless, looking nerdy was not my only problem, when I got up to walk I teetered and tottered, feeling as if I was a newborn horse trying to walk upright for the first time. It was like I was looking at the world through 3D glasses, but as soon as I took off my spectacles, I felt woozy, like my surroundings were running and swimming around me. I was so afraid, even to a point where when I went out in public, even in a room full of strangers, I felt as if their eyes were glued on me.

The first time I got impressions with my new glasses was when my relatives came over. My cousins approached me first, immediately holding fingers up to my face annoyingly asking, "Can you see it? Can you see it?" and dancing around me shouting with glee, "Four eyes, four eyes!" My aunts and uncles then came up to me next asking for my eyeglass prescription, and in response to the numbers I mumbled out, I got a melodramatic "Woow." These reactions only made me think just how much worse the comments would be at a place where your appearance defines yourself, school.

At last it was the dreaded Monday morning. I tucked my covers in tightly, making sure my mother couldn't scrape me off my bed, but after several attempts to run back to bed, I could tell my mother wasn't going to give up so I gave in.

Arriving at my classroom's paint peeled door, I refused to budge. Arguing, I whisper-shouted to my mother, "I don't want to go in!" Fed up, she replied, "You're going in and that's that!"

I trudged in slowly, trying to slink in unnoticed, but of course I was late. Immediately I speed walked to my desk, trying to avoid the disgusted narrow-eyed glares, and attempting to hide my face behind the pupil in front of me.

All that face-hiding and trying to sneak the day by without getting noticed probably went on for days, maybe weeks, but looking back I realized how stupid I was. I saw that no one was making nasty comments or laughing behind my back. Sure there was the usual, "What, you got glasses?" reaction, but I realized that the people that knew me for me, and the ones who were my most trusted confidantes and supporters didn't care that I differed from my old self - they played with me the same and hung out with me the same, and I realized that real friendships would always stay the same, no matter how your outer appearance changes.

## La Prophétie Fausse

*Maya Delzer, Moscrop Secondary*

Il y a longtemps, dans la ville de Windermere, il y avait un duc froid et arrogant appelé Gustave Martin. Il courtisait une dame, Sylvia, qui était fidèle et douce. Gustave a dit qu'il aimait Sylvia, mais leurs visites sont devenu de moins fréquentes, alors Sylvia a commencé s'inquiéter. Une nuit, juste avant qu'il est parti, elle lui demandé, «tu seras ici demain, oui?»

Il a répondu avec un petit hochement de tête. Le lendemain elle l'attendait, mais il n'est jamais revenu; le duc a trouvé une femme beaucoup plus belle, et beaucoup plus riche.

Le temps passait, et maintenant le peuple était rassemblé dans la salle d'audience.

«Amène le prisonnier!» a crié le magistrat. Le claquement des portes immenses résonnait dans la salle alors que deux gardes traînaient un homme avenant mais débraillé.

Le magistrat gueulait, «M. Pascal Martin, fils du Duc de Windermere, tu es accusé de l'entrer par effraction dans la maison de Mademoiselle Jacqueline, et de l'avoir agressée en lui donnant un baiser, sans aucune permission, pendant qu'elle essayait de dormir! Tu dis que c'est à cause d'une 'prophétie'. Est-ce que tu peux nous expliquer ce qui est arrivé?»

«Bien sûr. Cela a tout commencé quand je me promenais dans la forêt» disait Pascal, pendant qu'il tournait sa tête vers la gauche et attendait le flash-back.

«Je suis tombé sur une vieille femme gentille. Elle m'a donné du thé et nous parlions de toutes sortes de choses. Mais quand j'ai dit mon nom, elle était choquée. Martin, comme Gustave Martin?» elle m'a demandé. Je la demandé si elle le connaissait, mais elle a seulement regardé dans le vide. Puis elle m'a raconté d'une prophétie et d'une fille qui avait besoin de mon aide! Alors j'ai dit merci, et j'ai grimpé le premier tour que j'ai vu! J'ai donné un baiser à la belle madame et voilà, elle s'est réveillée! Mais au lieu d'être reconnaissante de mes efforts, elle m'a donné une gifle!»

«Je crois qu'il est fou Monsieur!» a interrompu Jacqueline. «Il y a seulement une façon de savoir pour vrai. Amène le docteur!» Après une inspection longue et ennuyeuse, le docteur a conclu, «J'ai des mauvaises nouvelles, Monsieur. Mon diagnostique est que cet homme a un cas dangereux d'enflure et ... de stéréotype!» La surprise et les murmures éclataient autour de la salle, puis le magistrat a continué de parler.

«Tristement, il n'y a rien que je peux faire pour aider le stéréotype; il n'y a aucune remède pour ce niveau de démente. Mais, au sujet de l'enflure, je peux faire quelque chose. Nous en avons marre de vous nobles! Taxez et pilliez au nom de cette quête ou cette prophétie. Nous avons fini! Dix ans dans les mines devraient faire l'affaire. Gardes, emmenez-le!»

«Attends! Je suis l'élue! C'est la prophétie! Nooon!» protesté Pascal alors que les grandes portes claquaient derrière lui. Dans la foule, Sylvia souriait d'un air satisfait.

## Un Monde de Pauvreté

*Bradley Tang, Cariboo Hill Secondary*

C'est un matin d'hiver froid. Un tapis blanc couvre la ville. Les flocons de neige sont comme des plumes d'un cygne. Le soleil jette un coup d'œil juste au-dessus des montagnes. La lumière du soleil s'avance lentement et transforme la neige en quartz brillant. Les chansons d'oiseaux sont un réveil matin pour moi. L'odeur du pain frais remplit l'air comme s'il y avait une compétition de faire du pain. La boulangerie locale cuit du pain frais chaque matin. Mon estomac gargouille avec de la force. Le boulanger me lance une miche de pain. Je renifle et je commence à baver. Je prends un petit morceau de la miche et je le mets avidement dans ma bouche. Le morceau de pain qui est juste sorti du four est une fête dans ma bouche. Je bouffe toute la tranche rapidement avec des bouchées comme celles d'un requin.

La boulanger a vu tout. Il m'invite dans sa boulangerie. Je lui remercie avec de la reconnaissance. Je secoue la parka de neige de mon corps et j'essuie mes chaussures à l'entrée. La chaleur de la boulangerie est comme le paradis par rapport à l'extérieur. Le boulanger me demande qu'est-ce que je voudrais. Je réponds que n'importe quoi sera magnifique. Pendant qu'il prépare quelque chose, je regarde dehors, et je vois qu'il y a plusieurs stalactites de glace qui s'accrochent du toit qui sont des décorations naturelles. Le boulanger met un plat de biscuits devant moi. Je les mange même plus vite que la miche de pain. Les biscuits sont encore chauds et ils goutent comme si je n'avais pas mangé en siècles. Finalement, le boulanger me donne un verre de l'eau fraîche. L'eau est cristalline. Je bois tout le verre. L'eau est une potion de régénération brassée par les meilleurs sorciers.

## Three Words

*Georgia Hoskins, Burnaby Central Secondary*

Goodbye. It's a horrible word. Definition, used to express good wishes when parting or at the end of conversation.

Now it is a horrible word, but goodbye was better than what you said to me. Not the three words that you barely got out.

Because those three words broke me, made me a savage and made you the centre of my world.

They held empty promises that you and I both knew would never be true. Those three words were the reason I still haven't accepted that you are gone.

Thinking about it, you could have used any other words and they wouldn't have hurt as much as the ones you said.

You are dead, you died and you aren't coming back. But those three words suggested that you might.

Those three words are the first things I think about when I wake up and the last things I think about when I fall asleep.

No one wants to insult the dead, but you made it possible for the dead to insult the living.

Those words were a slap to the face, a push down the stairs and a wound festering across my thigh, all at once. I remember you, all of you.

You were happy, you were the one everyone wanted to be and you were the one person that wasn't supposed to die.

The first thing you said to me was, "You'd look better with short hair." You should see me now. You used to call me the 5 o'clock stubble across a man's face because you didn't know how to describe me. You used to pretend to be my boyfriend when unwanted boys talked to me. You were my dad's favorite and my sister's crush. You always had something to say about my outfit. I remember you saying if people were rain you'd be a drizzle and I'd be a hurricane, but I always knew it was you who was a hurricane. Because you could destroy everything around you with a small smile. I remember we used to yell off my apartment building's roof.

I remember how much I loved you. How I had a dropping feeling every time you looked at my sister the way I wanted you to look at me, but I brushed off those feelings as just silly things. I remember how close we were and that I could tell you anything, anything but my love for you because I couldn't admit it to myself. You'd playfully say that I was your soul mate. You never knew how much I didn't want those words to be a game. I remember the hurricane you'd stir up in me and how I wanted to be a hurricane with you. But you were always taken by some tropical storm.

I remember seeing you on that cold, white hospital bed. Covered in your own blood and I remember that being the first time I admitted to myself that I was in love with you.

I remember almost everything you have said to me. I will always remember the last three words you said to me.

I remember seeing you the day it happened, smiling, and face untouched, save a few pimples. I remember seeing you that night, mouth too cut up to smile, bruises covering almost every part of you.

I remember going to get you a photo of us from the car and coming back to the doctors telling your mother that there is no hope for you. I remember begging you to stay awake, to not close those perfect hurricane blue eyes and stay with me. To stay with your family.

Because you were the one person that was supposed to stay in my life. I moved and you stayed, we drifted ever so slightly. You were my first best friend, the first person I could trust, you were the first person I had a fight with and my first experience with death. You were the last person that was supposed to leave.

At your funeral was the first time I saw so many people cry over one person. I heard so many things that day and one of them of being, how brave you were. But you told me that you were afraid.

Never have I ever heard so many of your exes claim that they still love you. Never have I ever seen your friends cry. Never have I seen your friends so sober.

You brought this community together, but I wish we could have come together with something else.

You are dead and I am mad. You are dead and there's nothing anyone can do.

I wrote this to get closer, I wrote this to truly understand those three words. I wrote this so I could finally say those words without breaking even more.

So in the words of my late friend, "Until next time."

## It's Raining Cats and Dogs

*Bradley Tang, Cariboo Hill Secondary*

Long ago, there was a country called Pets. The Prime Minister of Pets was Pet Harper, a not very bright man, who always wanted his country to surpass bordering countries. The two co-capitals of Pets were Cat City and Dog City, which were situated close to each other. The two cities pitied each other because in Cat City, everyone loved cats and in Dog City, everyone loved dogs. The mayor of Cat City was a clever young man, Cat Corrigan, who didn't dislike the mayor of Dog City, Dog Ford, as much as the city he was the mayor of. On the other hand, Dog Ford despised Cat Corrigan for his youthfulness.

Since Pets was a rather humid country, it often rained heavily. The citizens of Cat City and Dog City each developed an expression for every time it rained heavily: "it's raining cats" and "it's raining dogs" for the respective city.

As the cities developed, their borders soon touched. Since neighbouring countries often laughed at how Pets had two co-capitals instead of one capital, Pet Harper decided to merge Cat City and Dog City, to form Pet City. Everyone at Pet City started to get along, letting go of their past beliefs, until it rained heavily again. Every time a citizen from one city said his/her city's expression for when it rained heavily, everyone else from the other city did not understand.

Cat Corrigan, Dog Ford and Pet Harper decided to have a meeting regarding the issue. Pet Harper quickly suggested, "I think the expression should just be 'it's raining pets.'"

"Not every pet describes well enough how hard it rains in Pet City," Cat Corrigan explained.

The mayor of a nearby city, who was also invited to address the issue, came late and proposed "it's raining mouses," as the city he was the mayor of was Mouse City. Cat Corrigan chuckled and said, "I believe that mice are too small to describe how hard it rains in Pet City."

"And if mice were big enough, the expression would be 'it's raining mice,'" said Pet Harper, trying not to laugh and thinking how clever he was.

Embarrassed, the mayor of Mouse City left as quickly as he came. Knowing that Dog Ford did not really like him, Cat Corrigan recommended hesitantly, "Maybe instead of 'it's raining pets', the expression for heavy rain can be 'it's raining cats and dogs.'"

After hearing the conversation, Dog Ford let go of his hatred towards Cat Corrigan, agreeing. Pet Harper also agreed, happy the meeting was over. They all walked outside to the podium, where citizens were waiting anxiously, to announce the new official expression describing heavy rain. Everyone loved the expression, so it quickly caught on.

To this day, people still use the expression "it's raining cats and dogs" whenever it's raining heavily. You might even come across someone who says "it's raining mice," or even "it's raining mouses."

## For Every Storm, a Rainbow

*Julia Han, Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

I am the rain. I stare into the sky as clouds begin to intertwine with each other, constructing a dome over the earth, sealing all its inhabitants in a dreary atmosphere. Weeping from the heavens above sprinkles placid droplets underneath the rolling clouds. I feel myself drifting as I unknowingly, unconsciously, searchingly lend myself to the misty blanket of faded grey wrapped around the sublunary world. I fall for what seems like eternity, until I hit a rough gritty surface below. I listen to the splashes of young children leaping in puddles with their rubber rain boots, careless of getting wet. Raindrops tap dance on a shingled roof and I join them in their merriment, jiving to the myriad beat of rain somersaulting down. My thoughts are mindless from the numbing cold, as I tumble through the light misty air. I whisk through the veil of sheer grey that has enveloped the earth, its grip subduing resonances all around until everything is...hushed. I feel the harsh pull from the sun and realize now that it is my time to leave. I let go and free my mind, for I know that I will be back another day, when the darkened clouds scatter miscellaneously like an unsolved jigsaw puzzle. I am only a mere memory now, an evanescence, just like the summer mist in the morning. Soft colors, subtle at first appear in the sky. Rosy hues weave in and out of the sky forming an upside down smile, for you can't have a rainbow without a little rain.



## Back When

*Christine Abion, Burnaby Central Secondary*

"When you love someone, you do everything for them.  
When you hate someone, you pretend to love them.  
When you use someone, you love them, not genuinely."

Living on the outskirts of a busy city, an abused, rather quiet girl always believed in that very quote. It told the tale of her heart. When she grows old, decrepit, she will still mutter out these very words to her infants.

Pitifully crouched over a rusty corner, the girl sat, crying. Above, an unsightly vision reflected into her blurry eyes; an obscure picture of mom, a very image that reminded her of demons. Defenseless, the girl recognized that smirk from anywhere. An atrocious look of sadism.

Alei stole a peek at the huge gap in one of the many broken windows, after seeing the lustrous glare of a knife. The atmosphere talked to her, telling her various possibilities about how her life might end. Young blood spilled onto her mother's hands? Legs started to manoeuvre, fast and strong, like wind. Although Alei knew it wouldn't take much longer until her power diminishes, mere instincts gave a strong hint; escaping was worth it.

Finally halting, she peered behind; it was dark, as if an entity was gonna come out to abduct her. Sooner than later, she discovered an alley to rest in. Right when Alei laid down, she disappeared into a dream; into a nightmare.

*'I was a kid again. No harsh memories to recall, no living catastrophes to go through in the future. I was a child; with satisfied parents, with a future, with an actual dream. When I looked up, it was my mom, smiling genuinely. I approach, making contact with her delicate hand. There was laughter emanating from above. Though this time, deeper than before. My dad, above me now, wanted to play with his daughter as well. I didn't know who I was then, but I would've stuck with it, even if it meant to forget the world, to be happy.'*

*Then time stopped, abruptly, at a sudden picture. It was a perfect image of a perfect family, framed and put on a pedestal to be seen, glowing bright gold. I stared at it with sincere bliss. Without warning, a fast forward to my teen years took place.*

*When it stopped, it was me, in that very corner, crying for the first time out of millions. Tired eyes spilled the color crimson, pale skin lost the familiar glow of happiness. My reason for crying was straightforward; I heard my parents' brief conversation, about how they were gonna dispose of me finally, and my heart broke once again. All I was; auctioned, recycled. I hate them. I hate them, right...?'*

She awoke once, seeing black. Falling. Falling up. Her consciousness faded. Revived again, the girl saw her parents.

*For the first time, a smile finally tore at her younger lips.*

This girl was me. When I cried for others, when I laughed, when I smiled. But now I'm here.

# Grade 9-10

## Broken Words

*Shenna He, Burnaby North Secondary*

We live in a world of blatant pageantry,  
 An unholy nucleus to persuasion and indoctrination  
     Caught in never ending cycles of inflicting pain and apologies,  
 Happiness peeling away until there's nothing left but a bruised and rotted core  
     Our flaws obscure our vision, people are misusing their time  
     Refusing to see the world from another stance  
     Words perceive us for some inscrutable reason only to focus on the negatives  
 We've all heard lips spilling honey, but voice spit fire  
     Some hearts follow the whisper, weeping in fear of it being the truth  
 And some hearts forget that words are just thoughts that can't be taken back  
     Words are simple and diminutive but compelling with impact  
     Just adolescent meanings to sound brave and wise  
     But it doesn't alleviate the intention, the way it hurts  
 But without intent or meaning, they have no real adherence  
     Prevent being oppressed by this world of pain  
 By locking up your broken words

## Men And Machines

*Blake Puzon, Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

When I think of the future,  
 I think of the men and the machines.  
 Our friends who used to play on fields,  
 Now blinded by the screen.

What was once a past of everlasting play,  
 No longer exists in this world today.  
 For iPhones and tablets now bring us happiness  
 While there are children  
 kicking without a ball in sadness.

Yet instead, we turn to our devices,  
 Which contributes greatly to this crisis.  
 Sports now dominated by a controller in hand,  
 With people on the beach  
 using a tablet on the sand.

The world is turning into a social spiral,  
 As fast as "Friday" went viral.  
 Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat.  
 Ruining true friends over until they're dead flat.

But what if it's not the end?  
 What if I took your hand, would you be my friend?  
 What if I told you to look up?  
 Would you listen?

Maybe the world has a little glimmer of hope left.  
 And our electronic devices  
 would be charged of theft,  
 Maybe tomorrow will be a day  
 without using our screens,  
 And the future, well,  
 Won't be about Men and Machines

# Lost Summers

*Lila Mooney  
Burnaby Central Secondary*

Do you remember those  
chords?

The ones that we  
played from the  
vibrating strings  
as we lay  
shoulder-to-shoulder:

you,  
i,  
and the summer sky?

And the birdsong that bounced  
off the dew and  
the sand and  
the day and  
the sun that seemed  
to fill the  
world with its softly shifting,  
golden  
tones?

All fear was a distant,  
blurred mirage,  
flickering, unnoticed from the  
meaningless past.

All sorrow was inexorably banished,  
all tears wrung from the  
day,  
until it was empty,  
and we could  
fill the vacant hours with  
our song...

beneath us was a world of dreams,  
and the sweet,  
watered fingers of the grass;

above us was only blue—  
the sky  
yearning above our  
youthful brows,  
a taut canvas of immaculate  
azure,  
ready for us to  
paint our hopes and  
write our promises on,  
a permanent reminder of  
an invisible truth.

Do you remember?

A sighing gale of bitter  
winter wind  
is my only reply.

We have grown old in  
spirit, and remain  
parallel only in memory.

Do you remember?

No, I know you don't.  
You have willfully forgotten—pain lingers too long.

This sun-warmed smile  
that I once beheld has broken,  
the drifting chords have fallen,  
burned away before my eyes  
by autumn's  
endless flame.

# Ghost

*Gloria Zhang  
Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

I was once deemed a ghost,  
Invisible to one's eyes,  
Too horrible – a disgrace to mankind.  
I was never more than another of their lies.

I wandered the cold streets  
Yet not a single hand did I find,  
Offered, to the fallen: I.  
And still, care I pined.

The heavens even seemed to plead my case  
As the tears of angels fell from the sky.  
Cold, wet, dark  
Not a single soul had stayed behind for me.

I was once deemed a ghost until you mended me.  
You stitched me back together, precision precise.  
Everyone left me for the dark  
But loneliness came out of the shadows  
and extended its arm.

## The Walk Home

*Hayes Wong*

*Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

Walking home seemed so easy,  
A mere stroll, not a hike,  
But as I leave the light of the bus,  
I am engulfed by the murk of night.

The distance seems to grow  
As I peer into the coal black darkness.  
My nerves turn to jelly,  
As I start on my path,

I muster up my courage,  
And march along the road,  
But my gallant spirit,  
Turns coward as I hear a snap.

My heart rate quickens,  
When I peer into the dark,  
My eyes dart everywhere,  
As fear rips through my mind.

"It's nothing," I think,  
As I tighten my grip on my bag,  
Gravel scatters behind me,  
And all my bravery evaporates.

I scramble for escape,  
Like a cornered rat,  
Flailing toward my porch that is a beacon,  
In the gloom of the night.

Something shambles behind me,  
But I dare not turn around,  
As I reach the landing,  
I decide to sneak a look.

My soul is pierced,  
By the eyes in the dark,  
And I prepare for the worst,  
As it jumps out of the void.

I throw up my hands,  
As something knocks me down,  
And licks my face,  
It's my neighbour's dog.

## Math<sup>2</sup>

*Nicholas Williams*

*Cariboo Hill Secondary*

This is the tale of the bane of my existence  
The villain that can always bring me down  
No matter how high my pedestal is.  
The story of the biggest bully at school, math.

This scoundrel strikes fear  
into the hearts of schoolchildren,  
Young and old, it has no mercy.  
Whenever you hear the click of calculators,  
You know the monster is near.  
But it wasn't always this way.

In a simpler time,  
filled with times tables and play dough  
We were the best of friends.

Now the only calculation I want to make  
Is at which temperature you'll burn fastest.

Every class presents a new struggle  
The numbers seem to float in front of me,  
The answers always just out of reach.  
Math feels like a puzzle with a missing piece.

I've decided that the only kind of Pi  
I want to deal with.

Is the apple-stuffed kind  
with ice cream on the side.

## Eaten Alive

*Kathy Xu, Burnaby North Secondary*

The smiles we keep on our faces  
Conceal the desperate pleas that  
shriek like prisoners  
inside us

The words that leave our mouths  
Are to merely fool others  
The real ones will shatter the barricades  
we've all built around ourselves  
Our eyes seem to flicker with brightness  
But look closer,  
It's nothing but two  
empty voids

The things we keep locked away  
Gnaw at our insides  
And seep through our bones  
Our thoughts run frantic  
We push them  
down  
deep  
away  
but they resurface  
and eat us alive.

# Vancouver

*Selena Cui, Burnaby North Secondary*

Where the sea hugs the land  
 In an unforgiving embrace  
 And the wind strolls down busy streets  
 And teasingly plays with your hair.  
 High above it all  
 Perched on the nose of a peaceful mountain giant,  
 I see the city pulse with a golden glow.  
 They vault the bridges,  
 glimmer around the webbed grids  
 And climb the mountain towards me,  
 falter, and halt.  
 They fight against the closing curtains  
 And threaten to envelope our tiny existence with  
 fear, confusion, chaos.

The day brings vengeance with it  
 Pelting bullets sharp and cold as curses  
 from an enemy's mouth  
 Ricocheting off every possible exposed surface  
 With no mission except to harm  
 Whatever is foolish enough to stand in its path.  
 All of Vancouver seems to cry  
 Tears roll furiously down the window  
 Obscuring vision, pairing the world cold shades of  
 gray, black and white.  
 Metallic, gargantuan trees  
 reach desperately towards the sky  
 For a better tomorrow, a brighter day.  
 But chained to the ground as they are,  
 They can only struggle  
 and weep.  
 The rain takes pity,  
 softens  
 and slowly halts in its path of destruction  
 It tinkles gently across the asphalt  
 covering everything with  
 an apologetic sheen of water.

Night falls again, the primal ink slowly seeps in.  
 But look there!  
 Light leaps across the inlet,  
 Pirouettes at a lonely lighthouse  
 An arabesque, then  
 running, running through the empty streets  
 Grand-jete up the tallest skyscrapers,  
 A reflection shivering in the still water  
 and finishing with a wink,  
 and a dainty curtsy near the outskirts.

We are a tiny spark and out numbered  
 by the encroaching darkness.  
 Yet from our frigid waters and steely rocks  
 we conjure flames and mould it to our will.  
 We fashioned stars and weaved them  
 into our own tiny galaxy  
 A personal nebulae necklace  
 to dangle across the dusk when the sky is covered  
 thickly by bundles of wool.  
 These brilliant lights are ours.  
 We made and can make more.  
 No beast of the gloom with talons of black,  
 nor icy gales  
 can snuff the blazing heat of our dwardom.  
 Faced by the changeless night we raise the torch  
 and celebrate our minuscule triumph.

# Précipitation

*Ricky Yin, École Alpha Secondaire*

Lentement  
 Un grondement  
 Des nuages  
 Qui cachent le soleil  
 Qui cachent la lumière  
 Noir, sombre  
 Répandant à travers l'horizon  
 Dressants au-dessus la terre  
 Comme un tigre prêt à bondir  
 Sur une proie insouciant  
 Un avertissement final  
 Un grognement dans la distance  
 Les animaux se dispersent  
 Réfugiant  
 La terre perturbée a soif  
 Ne peut plus supporter  
 Et comme la proie  
 Se renonce à l'inévitable  
 Destin sombre  
 Une dernière aspiration  
 Et la pluie tombe  
 De plus en plus fort  
 Emportant la chaleur  
 Et la sécheresse  
 Un fracassement qui éclaire le ciel  
 Avec la pouvoir de la nature  
 Et on peut entendre  
 L'expiration de soulagement  
 Tandis la pluie  
 Désaltère le soif  
 L'orage.

## Unspoken Words, Unheard Melodies

*Annika Fong  
Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

Tell my love the words that I cannot dare to speak  
From the depths of the ocean  
to the tallest mountain peak

Expressed from my truthful innocence  
But clashes with sorrowful dissonance  
Your tender melody wraps around  
my delicate heart  
Protecting from whoever dares to tear us apart  
Breathtaking music flows through my ears  
and echoes afar  
And stretches as far as a shimmering,  
shooting star  
As I reveal my beauty for all the world to enjoy  
Hear my sweet harmonies  
as my voice does not annoy  
Rather it enriches the soul  
as you feel the keys descend  
From the final notes of the pianist  
to the bittersweet end.

## Lonesome Auras

*Emily Lukas  
Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

To think that

A regal queen,  
Clothed in her splendour,  
Would feel hollow within.

A sovereign king,  
Valiant and brave,  
Would feel lonely at heart.

A noble prince,  
Filled with potential,  
Would feel worthless inside.

To think,  
That the pinnacle of society,  
The respected elite,  
Somehow felt incomplete.

Would be absolutely absurd.

## An Idea

*Karin Jin  
Burnaby South Secondary*

He gazed at me with chocolate eyes,  
Hair sleeker than a starless sky,  
His perfume breath, like a blanket on my skin,  
His mouth turning upwards as he held my chin.

He looked at me with such adore,  
With a sense that I was his, forever more,  
He held my cheek like candy glass,  
Fragile and delicate under his grasp.

But...

I fell into the ghost of him,  
Hitting hard on a figment whim,  
I fell in love with the idea of perfection,  
The thoughts and complexion of a fictitious  
reflection.

I didn't want to see the cracks of you,  
So I hid them away and believed the untrue,  
I thrived off the idea of you in my mind,  
Always remaining oblivious and blind.

## Because We're Family

*Vanessa Chow  
Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

Here for you no matter what,  
If you're hurt we'll heal your cut.  
And if you fall like an ancient statue,  
We promise to be there to catch you.  
Because we're family.

Strong individuals, but stronger together,  
Sturdy as stone, not frail like feathers  
Through thick and thin, we never leave  
We're inseparable like Adam and Eve.  
Because we're family.

Linked by generations of bloodlines,  
We're worth more than dollar signs.  
Blood is thicker than water  
And we'll be your lifelong spotters,  
Because we're family.

Clearly similar, both inside and out,  
Great minds think alike, without a doubt,  
Sadly, life isn't always a beautiful breeze,  
But we have the strength of Hercules,  
Because we're family.



# Human-kind

*Jamie Barrett-Lennard, Cariboo Hill Secondary*

Dr. Martin A. Geddon was exhausted. His eyes squinted in an attempt to compete with the bright fluorescent lights of the laboratory. His head pounded so hard that he could not determine whether the cause was a migraine or a small man hammering inside his head. Headache or miniature construction worker, the janitor's incessant whistling wasn't helping. What he needed—he decided—was caffeine, and so to no one in particular he began loudly misquoting Shakespeare's Richard III, "A coffee! A coffee! My research for a coffee!"

"Really?" his Harvard University educated assistant asked.

"No," said Martin, "But you could get me one anyway."

"Of course sir," his assistant strode off, valiantly attempting to appear somewhat important, "I shall return momentarily."

Had Martin been in a better mood he might have laughed. He was not in a better mood. He surveyed the row of parts in front of him; eventually his gaze stopped on The Element. The Element was the small lump of rock that would—if all went well for Martin—wipe out half the earth's population. It had a way of making your gaze stop. Finding these parts was what had kept Martin and his associates awake for many long nights. Finally, he had them all. The thought sent a thrill of excitement through him. The destruction of half the world's population would shatter the globe, leaving him to pick up the pieces and begin his rule over a golden age of humanity. The threat of a second attack—even if it wasn't actually possible—would stop all rebellions in their tracks. And once he had ruled for long enough, no one would want to rebel anyway. His assistant returned, flourishing the coffee. Martin drank and felt instantly better.

"One small bomb for man," he quipped, "One giant boom for mankind."

"Human-kind," said a voice behind him.

Martin shivered. If any voice could lower the temperature, it certainly belonged to his apocalypse creating partner—and only scientific equal—Iron Frost.

"That's not what Neil Armstrong said," he replied defensively.

He turned to face her and was once again surprised by how aptly her name suited her. How had her parents known? It was a mystery to him.

Ignoring his previous statement she glanced at The Element, "When do we detonate it?"

"Sometime this week"...*if it works...* "Let's say Monday around tea time, just to be safe."

"Excellent!" she smiled, "I've always hated tea time."

Later that night, long after the scientists had finished working, the janitor stepped into the room. Striding quickly to the row of parts, he carefully swept The Element into his garbage bag.

"One small sweep for man," he whispered to himself, "A few more night's sleep for mankind."

Pain seared through him when the bullet hit his back. As he fell to the floor, a voice icily reproached him,

"Human-kind," it said as the bag was removed from his hand, "or at least, half of it."

## The Beginning of The End

## [Augmented Validity]

*Carol Li, Burnaby North Secondary*

The man's drink was balanced in his pale fingers. The skyline was prominent that night, the view conspicuous from his penthouse office; he was not old yet; held himself with confidence but the years had torn away from him. His shoulders slacked, his eyes dulled, movements decreasing in agility.

"If I could rest," he murmured softly to himself, swirling the glass of red liquid. His eyes closed, briefly, enjoying the silence before setting the glass down and taking a seat. There was work to be done, but he was so tired...

The foyer was hardly crowded, but he was nowhere to be seen. The young woman tapped her phone impatiently and wondered if he was ever early.

"Miss!" a voice called, on cue. The woman turned to see a small girl waving at her. A head of mousy blonde hair, innocuously dressed in a tailored grey sundress. Only one person would subject someone at that age to such attire.

"Hello there," the young man said, materializing behind her. Smartly dressed in a pinstripe suit, smirk on point.

"You're late," she snapped, brusque. Her eyes drifted scornfully down to the girl. "Why bring *her* along?"

His hand moved to the girl's head protectively. "I can't bring my daughter to tour the building?"

"Whatever," the woman responded flatly. "Upstairs. Don't get lost."

The building was modernly built, floors and walls built with fiberglass. "Miss, do you work here?" the girl asked, marvelling at the building. The woman shot the man a look, albeit he pretended to not see.

She should know, she thought with disdain. Why else would he bring her?

"Of course I do," the woman replied finally. Then to him, "The boss is waiting in the penthouse."

It was even more brilliant in daylight. The woman pushed open the doors, but dropped etiquette when she noticed the figure slumped over the large oaken table.

"Oh my!" she cried, rushing forward. The boss was sprawled over the desk, a red stain over his heart. A shot glass lay flat on its side beside his clammy white fingers, still clutching a pen mid-sentence.

"What's going on?" the young man called. He rounded the table, next to the woman. "What—"

The woman was slowly falling deeper into panic. "I—we... need to call security," she sputtered, hands fumbling with her phone. "I think he's..."

The girl ran up to the desk, innocent and curious. "What's happening, Daddy?"

"Don't look," the young man told his daughter, ultimately ignored. She set her small hands on the boss's unmoving head, and began to laugh.

"Why're you so scared, Daddy?" she exclaimed. "He's just sleeping!" The woman and the man met eyes, the bond that they once shared reigniting briefly.

"Sweetie," the young man whispered, bending down to face his daughter with a gentle voice, causing the woman to feel a pang of melancholy. "I'm afraid it's much more permanent than that."

At that very moment—to their dismay—the boss stirred.

"What did I miss?" he muttered groggily, sitting up. He noticed the baffled expression of his peers and looked down, surprised to see that his shirt had been stained by the red of spilled wine.

"That was my favourite shirt," he sniffed. He pulled it away from his skin and stretched.

"I—" the woman began, but decided better of it. The girl smiled broadly.

"See," she mused, swelling in pride. "I *told* you he was just sleeping."

## Le Cri d'un Faucon

*Cassandra Merkens, École Cariboo Hill Secondaire*

Le cri d'un faucon perce le silence serein du matin. Les oreilles du cheval tictaquent. Il lève sa tête et répond avec son propre hennissement perçant, qui résonne sans réponse. Le cheval reste complètement immobile et ses yeux scrutent la campagne pour des indices de mouvement. Le faucon en haut dans le ciel, regarde le cheval qui semble comme un jouet qui était laissé dans l'herbe. Le faucon fait une descente élégante et le cheval suit ses mouvements avec ses yeux. Les mouvements gracieux et puissants fascinent le cheval. Le faucon atterrit sur un piquet de clôture et se plie les ailes. Le cheval regarde le faucon avec une curiosité immense. Tout à coup, le faucon s'étend les ailes et décolle très vite le long de la clôture. Le cheval décolle très vite après le faucon, avec ses sabots tonitruants à travers la terre. Le faucon vole plus loin que la fin de la clôture. Le cheval voit la clôture et les souvenirs sombres sont évoqués rapidement dans son esprit. Les sauts sont recouverts par des clous et s'il ne saute pas avec assez de la hauteur les clous vont déchirer ses jambes. Le cheval se cabre et se souvient au fouet qui le frappe. Il regarde les collines ondoyantes avec un désir ardent mais, la clôture et ses souvenirs se gardent piégés.

Un réveille-matin sonne et un garçon sort du lit. Il traîne ses pieds à la fenêtre et il se tient debout sur son balcon, il prend une profonde inspiration de l'air frais du matin. Puis, il commence à toussoter quand la pollution de la rue très occupée au-dessous du balcon arrive à son nez. Avec un autre coup d'œil aux bâtiments autour de son appartement, il voit les collines aux périphéries de la ville où les petits animaux de la ferme parsèment le flanc de coteau et il aime penser d'être libre comme eux. Il sort de son appartement par la sortie de secours, et il monte au toit. Les toits plats qui encerclent sont attirants et il sourit, puis il décolle en courant. Il a la sensation d'être en train de voler, ses pieds volent à travers les toits. Il agrippe un tuyau d'évacuation d'eau et glisse par terre et continue à courir, il court sur les murs et en haut des bancs sans soin dans le monde. Il tourne et court dans une ruelle et il se parcourt puis il voit une clôture et les souvenirs sombres sont évoqués rapidement dans son esprit. Il se souvient des garçons qui l'avaient poursuivi et avaient piégé son dos à la clôture. Il avait essayé de monter la clôture mais le fil barbelé avait déchiré ses mains. Les garçons l'ont baissé par terre et ensuite ils l'ont battu. Il veut monter la clôture mais ses souvenirs le gardent par terre.

Le cheval retourne à la clôture et encore il regarde les collines ondoyantes avec un désir ardent. Le garçon retourne à la clôture et encore il regarde la ruelle sur l'autre côté. Le cheval recule, le garçon recule et regarde la clôture. La main du garçon et les jambes du cheval fourmillent. Ils courent vers la clôture et sautent. Ils sont des faucons qui s'envolent. Ils atterrissent sur l'autre côté de la clôture; ils sont libres et il n'y a rien qui peut les arrêter. Le cri d'un faucon sonne dans la distance.

## The Donut Incident

*Ricky Yin, Alpha Secondary*

There was a squeak as the car door swung open, and the abrupt clump as the door closed echoed into the dimly-lit street illuminated by a single flickering streetlamp. A soft gentle drumming of precipitation falling was the only sound as the man stepped out of the vehicle. The passenger door opened and another man stepped out. There was a whoosh as the man quickly unfurled a black umbrella and closed the door. The first man ducked under the umbrella and the two hurriedly rushed past the lit area pooling at their feet, the heavy drops of water coalescing from the dripping metal beacon bouncing off the soft fabric of the umbrella with a patter. The gurgling from the miniature stream flowing into the gutter echoed as a soft jazz melody was heard as the duo neared the nearby café. The moon slowly faded behind a cover of clouds, rendering the already pitch-black atmosphere even darker.

There was a light jingle as the two entered the empty coffee shop, the warm air enveloping them in an aromatic embrace, and the two sighed contentedly as the parasol was closed. The barista behind the counter quickly noticed their presence. No words were exchanged as the first man nodded to signal he would like the usual. The two collected the small paper bag and coffees and slid into a booth.

"Any ideas, Swanson?" the first man asked, addressing his companion.

"A few, Detective Edgar," Swanson replied calmly as he sipped his double-double. Alas, it was the infamous Detective Edgar and his trustworthy assistant Swanson. Detective Edgar eagerly opened up the paper bag and delicately plucked out a powdered chocolate-drizzled caramel-injected sprinkle-lathered strawberry jelly mini-donut, otherwise known as diabetes and a heart attack in a bite. Detective Edgar stuffed the donut into his mouth with gusto and proceeded to take out another donut with even more sugar and fat than the one before.

"I have a bad feeling about this," Swanson sighed nervously.

"About the assassin or the donuts?" Detective Edgar asked as he washed down another donut with his coffee.

"Both," Swanson shuddered. Both were equally horrendous.

"Don't worry about it Swanson, what's the big deal? The assassin only got away with two murders, a kidnapping and... five break-ins," Detective Edgar chuckled nonchalantly as he counted on his fingers. "And he always does it with a frying pan."

"Exactly! If we don't find him soon something bad is going to happen. I can feel it," Swanson muttered.

"Here's the only thing I don't understand though," Detective Edgar mused. "Whoever this man is, he's really smart. Always one step ahead of us like he already knows what we're going to do!" he whined.

"But how? And why?" Swanson asked.

"Have you ever considered this assassin could've been a woman? Gender equality!!" a woman screamed. Detective Coca and Sammy turned around but were suddenly hit in the head with a frying pan. The last thing they saw before they blacked out was the angry barista.

# Grades 11-12

## The Dance

*Suzanna Brenton, Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

Uno! Dos! Tres!  
The Spanish ballads ring in our ears  
as we spin around,  
Our hands firmly clasped,  
Bodies swaying in unison,  
Our hearts race as we dance to the beats.

The other dancers match our steps,  
Their shadows spring to life on the cobble court,  
Old and young, it matters not,  
Life shines through them as they swirl.

The instruments pulse in rhythm,  
Voices float in and out of the plaza,  
People open their windows to hear  
the spicy, vibrant music;  
This is in our blood.

Love and laughter fills the calle,  
Dresses flow and ripple, like waves,  
Vitality breaks free as everyone moves,  
We live for this.

## Drop of Dew

*Ariel Chiao, Burnaby North Secondary*

The day before you were gone  
You were a drop of dew  
So pure, so innocent  
Your smile is far more beautiful  
Than the badge on your collar

Now you are gone  
Somewhere across the country  
Somewhere on a General's list  
Somewhere beyond my reach  
There you are, aiming with one eye shut,  
Firing like a cold-blooded beast.

But you are fighting  
For freedom  
For the country  
For you and me.

But that is not what I want.

I don't want to see you  
Shooting at the men who also  
Have families waiting for their return

I don't want to see you  
Losing control of humanity  
Fearing to become  
one of the monsters you once hated

But you left me no choice.

You are gone  
Like a drop of dew  
Sinking into the mother Earth  
You were once so pure, so innocent

But now,  
Without even seeing it,  
I know that the dew  
Is covered with blood  
Not so pure, not so innocent.  
And your soul,  
I can no longer see.

Because you have none.

## Math

*Kathryn Choi, Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

Neatly compose the f of x equation;  
There is no room for a faulty notation.  
To start, define the nameless variable.  
Don't worry my peers, this stuff is all bearable.

We must state the unknown, begin with our marks,  
Pick any letter, no more question marks!  
The later you realize the letter you see,  
The sooner you'll accept that you got a C.

Expand the factored form, and merge it to one,  
Hear your mom shout, "Don't disappoint me son!"  
Isolate, substitute, use the quadratic formula.  
There's no need to rush, for you see the parabola.

Lastly, find your roots both the y and x intercept  
To wake up in math class confused but well-slept.

## Guilt of Gorging

*Lydia Chow, Burnaby North Secondary*

O, diet spirits, cleanse me of these carbs  
for I can no longer fit these fine garbs  
Alas! Who knew the cake would be so sweet  
and how tender was that rich, juicy meat  
O, woe! Let these waters wash these oils  
hands slick with regret, my anger boils  
Out, cursed spot! You are three, five, too many  
sweet morsels, I take another twenty  
My heart is heavy, but stomach heavier  
men don't spare a glance, as I'm fleshier  
O red cupcake, I beg thee to leave my dreams  
as I am tempted by your sprinkles and cream  
Woe! Perfectly flaky, hot golden pies  
thou shall be why I will double in size  
Is this a sign which I see before me?  
"All you can eat buffet," how can this be?  
Alas, 'tis open twenty-four seven  
surely I have died and gone to heaven  
Rows after rows of delectable food,  
glazed, barbecued, fried, never looked so good  
O, diet spirits, please hear all my cries  
filling my stomach, I feel my demise  
Who would've thought pizza had this much oil?  
Gorging on food, I don't look one bit royal  
I look at my dusty gym membership card  
I did not think a diet would be so hard  
Returning home, my head hung low in shame  
nothing but my horrid cravings to blame  
To bed, to bed, my sin can't be undone  
surely I'll still be Macbeth's only one

## These are the Hands

*Breyden Chong, Burnaby North Secondary*

These are the hands of a music conductor,  
Whimsically producing intricate movements  
With accentuated dips and sways.  
A clear passion behind every wave  
Of the silver-plated baton,  
Captivates the audience with awe  
As crisp musicality fills the room.

These are the hands of an artist,  
Guiding the paintbrush with ease.  
An array of colours  
Spread effortlessly on canvas  
By delicate strokes of the wrist.  
The artist beams at the finished product,  
With admiration of his work.

These are the hands of a traffic officer,  
Confidently directing moving vehicles.  
Right-angles formed by the arm  
Firmly erect the familiar red stop sign.  
Quick blows of the whistle  
run through the intersection  
As tires screech forward against the pavement.

These are the hands of a computer operator,  
Whose fingers frantically strike the keyboard  
At alarming speeds.  
Inquiries register rapidly on the monitor  
As beads of sweat trickle onto the desk.  
Prompt mouse clicks come without a breather,  
Only to stop briefly to address the  
Relentless ring of the telephone.

These are the hands of a surgeon,  
Steady with profound patience and control.  
Clamminess ensues under rubber gloves  
Upon the commence of open heart surgery.  
Fixated eyes above a white mask  
Reveal an undivided focus of precision,  
As stitched tissues are delicately rejoined.

It is after a lengthy evening of edits and revisions  
In which the hands of a writer  
Conclusively sets the pencil to rest.  
Beyond the scribbles  
Of crossed words and synonyms in margins,  
Lies an arrangement of sentences brimming with  
Originality and lucid imagination.  
These—  
Are my hands.



## La Voix d'un Album Souvenir

*Samantha Hill, École Cariboo Hill Secondaire*

Je place l'album souvenir dans mes mains  
 Au début, je n'entends rien.  
 C'est un objet, il est muet.  
 Mais tout à coup j'entends une douce voix,  
 Timide mais insistante.  
 L'album souvenir me raconte d'un mariage autrefois,  
 Avec une voix joyeuse.  
 Il rit à cause des moments hilarants  
 Bien qu'il ne se souvienne plus pourquoi  
 Ces occasions étaient tellement drôles.  
 Peu à peu, sa voix s'intensifie.  
 Il sourit comme un parent fier  
 En révélant la naissance des enfants.  
 Maintenant il glousse  
 comme un enfant d'âge préscolaire  
 Quand il revisite les années de la marelle  
 Et de l'apprentissage  
 De lacer ses propres chaussures.  
 Il chuchote à propos des autres instants  
 Qui n'étaient pas si glorieux :  
 Un enfant en pleurs, une maman épuisée,  
 Un papa avec un air stressé;  
 La mort d'une grand-mère.  
 Il rigole en décrivant les instantanées  
 Qui se sont passés inaperçus :  
 Plusieurs drôles d'expressions sur les visages.  
 Il acquiert un ton nostalgique en réfléchissant  
 Sur la maturation des enfants  
 Et termine sa longue histoire  
 en me rappelant qu'il y a  
 Un nouveau album souvenir à remplir.

## here's to you

*Becky Tu, Cariboo Hill Secondary*

i've never been able to choose between anything  
 but with you, it's never been a question  
 there was never any doubt  
 because you  
 you are absolutely stunning  
 in all the right ways

you are my favourite shade of blue  
 when the sky is changing overhead  
 teaching me patience and wordless joy  
 you are my favourite flavour of ice cream  
 summer days spent getting lost  
 long road trips and bonfires by the beach  
 you are my favourite time of night  
 when the stars keep all my secrets  
 and i sneak out for an impromptu adventure  
 you are my favourite sweater  
 during december cold  
 huddled on the couch with a mug of hot cocoa  
 you are my favourite song  
 playing on loop through my headphones  
 as i hum along and dream of neon city lights  
 you are my favourite pen  
 gliding smoothly as i spill my heart  
 a reassuring weight in my hand

you are my favourite smile  
 my best friend  
 my safe haven  
 you are infinitely breathtaking  
 nothing less and always more  
 and you  
 you will forever be  
 my favourite poem



## Les Papiers Blancs

*Catherine Zhu, École Moscrop Secondaire*

Le vieil homme,  
 Qui habite sur la rue dix-sept,  
 Achète une pile de huit par douze feuilles de  
 papiers blancs,  
 Chaque jour.  
 La commerçante ne demande jamais pourquoi,  
 Mais elle ne doit pas.  
 La lumière fluorescente de la boutique réfracte,  
 De la broche de guerre du vieil homme,  
 Parfaitement épingle sur son cœur,  
 « 1939 – 1942 »  
 Sculpté doucement par le bord.  
 Mais une fois, elle remarque ses doigts méticuleux,  
 Qui sont la taille parfaite pour le clavier d'un piano.  
 Alors elle demande,  
 « Pourquoi ? »  
 Et il répond : « Pilote, j'étais un pilote. »  
 Alors elle demande,  
 « Pourquoi ? »  
 Et il arrête.  
 Mains serrées sur le paquet de papier,  
 « L'invincibilité »  
 Puis il part,  
 Et il n'est jamais revenu.  
 Une couche de poussière épaisse se recueille sur  
 les paquets de huit par douze papiers blancs,  
 Attends le vieil homme,  
 Attends,  
 Attends.  
 Finalement, la commerçante prend un paquet de  
 huit par douze papiers blancs à la maison du vieil  
 homme.  
 La porte s'ouvre et la femme du vieil homme l'a  
 remercie pour le papier.  
 Lui dit de la suivre dans la salle de séjour.  
 La commerçante est surprise parce que dans le  
 coin de la salle de séjour,  
 Était le vieil homme,  
 Qui pliait,  
 Un avion en papier.  
 Entouré par des centaines d'avions en papier.  
 Elle demande,  
 « Pourquoi ? »  
 Et le vieil homme sourit,  
 Il tient un avion en papier et dit, « L'invincibilité. »

## Porcelain Skin

*Emma Karlsen*

*Burnaby North Secondary*

a crack  
 running through my  
 porcelain skin,  
 it is small,  
 but it continues  
 to spread.  
 with each step  
 the fracture grows,  
 the fault lines  
 of my body  
 elongating,  
 wrapping down  
 my limbs  
 like vines.  
 they cannot  
 see the rift  
 that has formed,  
 cannot see  
 the glue  
 i've used  
 to hold myself  
 together.  
 they will only  
 see the  
 shatter.

## page 57 of a lost journal: *unstamped letter*

Kate Olivares, Cariboo Hill Secondary

I am writing to you because it is December,  
And for whatever reason  
The snow outside  
Carves the shape of your name.  
And that makes me sad.

I would like to start  
By being blunt.  
To be perfectly frank,  
I was (or, maybe, am)  
Madly in love with you.

I'd also like to point out  
That it was so abundantly real for me,  
So *present* in my life  
That I'm shocked it never  
Took a tangible shape  
And physically grabbed you.  
I was also very glad about this.

People always tell me  
That it must be so hard,  
So hard to endure all this,  
But it's the exact opposite.  
That's the thing  
About my love for you:

*It never hurt.*

I had super powers;

I felt superior to others  
Because I knew everything  
To be blissfully true.  
It was all a high;  
My veins were on ecstasy.  
You were my version of the sun  
That kept the dopamine pumping.  
And I really miss it.

Not you,  
But *you*.  
Who inadvertently elicited  
The best version of myself,  
The version that is in love with you,  
Who was *capable* to be in love with you.  
And that makes happy,  
December snow be damned!

And one more time,  
Just to be perfectly clear;  
I love you.  
I love you.  
I love you.

You could've been it.

yours,

*[continued on page 58]*

## Assimilation au Canada

Sofia Savkovic, *École Alpha Secondaire*

L'assimilation  
 débutée par l'éducation.  
 Sauvez les immigrants  
 des Canadiens trop dénigrants.  
 Sauvez les immigrants  
 qui ne savent pas  
 les valeurs  
 et les coutumes  
 canadiennes.  
 On cherchait à les intégrer,  
 à les faire parler  
 et les faire agir  
 pour les ourdir  
 à la culture canadienne.  
 Mais on aurait dû  
 laisser chaque groupe  
 valoriser son héritage.  
 Mais ce n'était pas  
 seulement les immigrants.  
 Le problème d'assimilation  
 se poursuit aux autochtones.  
 C'est comme un cyclone.  
 Le Canada était colonisé  
 par la police qui a forcé  
 les autochtones de se déplacer  
 et oublier leurs valeurs.  
 Grâce à l'Acte constitutionnel  
 cette action criminelle  
 d'assimilation autochtone  
 a finalement pris fin.  
 Mais pour les Canadiens  
 les Canadiens français  
 l'histoire se poursuit.  
 L'enseignement du français  
 a été interdit dans les provinces.  
 La présence du règlement  
 dix-sept a finalement  
 pris sa place.  
 Il fallait beaucoup de temps  
 avant que les minorités francophones  
 n'obtiennent plus de reconnaissance.  
 Heureusement  
 il y avait un dépaysement  
 et on n'a plus  
 d'assimilation trop évidente.

## Isolation

Wassim Khelifi  
 École Moscrop Secondaire

Il n'y a aucun mouvement  
 La dérélliction ravage les étoiles  
 Comme un virus qui se propage dans les veines  
 Je crie,  
 Mais le silence gagne  
 Je ris,  
 Mais la mélancolie gagne  
 Je me noie dans mes propres larmes  
 Vague après vague après vague  
 Un rythme désagréable et gênant  
 Une lumière  
 Très lumineuse et pourtant  
 Je ne peux pas la voir  
 Seuls les autres peuvent la voir  
 Ils ne sont pas dans ma position  
 Ils m'écrasent pendant qu'ils me consolent  
 Je peux voir ma réflexion dans leurs yeux  
 Mais je ne vois pas mon cœur  
 Ma neurasthénie  
 Ils peuvent me voir à travers la fenêtre  
 La fenêtre brisée  
 La vue est obstruée  
 Ils ne voient pas  
 Mon thébaïde

## A Child's Favourite Hiding Spot

*Chanessa St-Laurent, Alpha Secondary*

A smile spread on your face, despite the pain in your side where a cardboard box of Band-Aids was digging into your ribs. An itching grows in your throat, caused by a stifled laugh, and your eyes fill with water. The harmless silhouettes of cleaning supplies blur into menacing ghouls in the dim light that the crack in the cupboard allows. There is a pain that runs up your spine and into your neck. You try to reposition yourself but the underbelly of the sink juts out from the ceiling of the cupboard, insisting that you stay the way you are. You freeze, and suck in your breath, you cannot afford to make a sound, not so much as a whistle of breath. The patter of curious footsteps that belong to oblivious people echo through the quiet house. The patter grows nearer, and you turn to stone. A stone statue with a beating heart, a typically silent beating with a sound now magnified by the surrounding silence; a stone statue whose heart beats with such strength that it bruises the stone ribs that protect it. The patter fades away in the opposite direction and you finally notice the metallic taste in your mouth, the result of chewing your lips in the anticipation of being found.

Pain and discomfort in your neck, and side, and spine; anxiety so overwhelming it fills not just your head, but your body; hands shaking, feet quaking, whole body pulsing with the beats of your heart. It's strange how we can take such joy in hiding, or in being sought, despite the discomfort and anxiety, or perhaps not despite at all, but rather, because.

## Everlasting Circles

*Peter Hung, Burnaby North Secondary*

The sun shone brightly as it rose above the horizon, colouring the dark, blue sky. A gentle breeze joined the sun's morning routine as the leaves on the trees gently danced in response. As we strolled across a cement path around a lively green park, boisterous birds chirped their regular repertoire. My grandfather, Gong-Gong, slouched upon a worn, maroon-coloured cane as he slowly walked across the green, spirited park. The cane wobbled slightly as Gong-Gong's calloused and weathered hand applied pressure with every step. We found ourselves a bench in front of a garden full of vibrant tulips and blushing Chinese azaleas. My grandfather stiffly lowered his petite body with the support of my hands under his armpits. The once jubilant and round body of Gong-Gong had withered into an unfamiliar bony and hollow structure. After I sat myself down next to my grandfather, he turned his slender face toward mine. With a familiar smile that bared his false teeth, coupled with rainbow arching eyes, Gong-Gong calmly said, "I'll miss you, Ka-Chun."

Every few years, I travel with my family to my parents' homeland, Guangzhou, China. It is a bustling city, where millions of people and mom-and-pop-stores fill the sidewalks – whether it is daylight, or star bright. When I arrived in Guangzhou a few years ago, I was met with an unfamiliar scent of lingering cigarette smoke and car exhaust. As sweat formed around my forehead from the boiling, humid air, another feeling of warmth greeted me. With wrinkled eyes arching like two rainbows as well as a smile that proudly presented his false teeth, Gong-Gong hugged my younger brother with joy.

"Ah, Ka-Chun," my grandfather paused and analyzed my brother from head to toes. "You have grown so tall!"

"U-uh... I'm Ka-Loa..." my obfuscated brother replied, as he turned to our parents for aid.

"Oh? I'm sorry, Ka-Loa," apologized Gong-Gong. "I must be getting old."

As Gong-Gong continued to hug my brother, I stepped up to greet my apologetic, yet smiling grandfather. When he noticed me, his dark-brown eyes glistened with joy. "Ka-Chun! You look very different... you've also grown your hair," Gong-Gong exclaimed. I smiled in response with a subtle, flushed face as I hugged him tightly. Immediately, I noticed his small stature had become much smaller with a slight presence of bones. However, I quickly dismissed the thought as I was exhausted from the extended flight.

Throughout the trip, I spent the majority of my time living in a world of materialistic desires. I went to malls that dwarfed the size of Canadian shopping centres, as millions of consumer products were showcased throughout the displays of every store. Stuck in a world of childish desires, I rarely spent any time with my grandparents, who longed to see me every year. Day after day, the number of clothes, toys and other material goods piled into ever-growing mountains, waiting to fall over. Throughout the duration of the trip, I never paid any attention to my grandparents.

As breakfast was being prepared by Mah-mah, I sat in the living room, boringly gazing at the television. Although Gong-Gong was next to me, no words were exchanged. Time moved slowly as the room was peaceful and still. However, the home phone pierced the peace and my grandfather quickly picked it up. Before the phone reached his ear, a loud, incomprehensible noise struck through the still air. Alarmed, my grandfather immediately hung up the wired phone and looked at me with bunched up, long grey eyebrows.

I cautiously questioned, "Do you know what that was, Gong-Gong?"

"I'm not sure," Gong-Gong paused and reiterated, "I'm not sure." Within a few seconds, the phone rang again and Gong-Gong reluctantly answered the call. Again, a loud and incomprehensible sound pierced through but my grandfather waited. After thirty seconds, I noticed the noise sounded like crying.

"Sh-She's... gone..." were the only two words that were audible, as they slipped through the noise. Immediately, Gong-Gong's body sagged, like a bag of rice, as he was struck with grief. Gong-Gong dropped the wired phone, clanging against the wall, and tears welled up in his wrinkled eyes. One drop escaped his left eye.

The following morning, before light broke across the sky, Gong-Gong discreetly knocked on my bedroom door and whispered, "Do you want to go on a walk?" As I wearily rubbed away the sleep in my eyes, we slowly proceeded through the streets of Guangzhou. The streets were already bustling as many people were opening their stores, continuing with their daily lives. There were sweaty and energetic workers unpacking the stock for their stores as chefs hurriedly prepared the morning menu for early customers. As we arrived at the lively green park, seniors in large groups performed their daily morning stretches. After Gong-Gong and I seated ourselves on a bench across a jubilant garden, he proceeded to gently gaze at the vibrant tulips and blushing azaleas. My grandfather turned his unfamiliar hollow face toward mine and gradually settled his eyes upon mine. I noticed his eyes were slightly bloodshot but he immediately smiled, causing me to dismiss the thought. The smile was the familiar wide grin with arching, rainbow-like eyes, but they carried a soft and pained expression. "I'll miss you, Ka-Chun."

Astounded, I quickly stuttered, "W-what are you s-saying?"

After a deep inhale, filling his petite body with air and gradually releasing it, Gong-Gong continued. "My sister passed away yesterday... and my time will also come sometime soon..." Gong-Gong paused to take a breath again, "It was wonderful seeing you again this year... it truly made me happy." I carefully looked at him, from head to toes, examining his small, weak stature. His skin was wrinkled and weathered, carrying various scars that scattered along his arms. "I spent the majority of my younger days to support our children." He turned away and gazed upon the lively garden. "It was tough – living from paycheck to paycheck, but I do not regret it at all. Our family has grown very large and my children were able to bear wonderful children as well." My grandfather paused and gazed into my neophytic eyes. "This big family provides me with a sense of security, allowing me to move on..." Gong-Gong inhaled slowly again. I did not notice how life around me continued to move because it felt as if time stood still when our eyes interlocked with each other. "I am very happy to see you again...so please, don't look at me with those eyes."

## Different Home, Different World

Natasha Carson, Burnaby Mountain Secondary

I stroll towards the entrance of the care home, as per routine every Monday afternoon. It's been a countless amount of times volunteering here; there's no doubt that the familiarity of the building's fresh pine wood interior and the dark cobblestone pathway pass by me as though I'd been there for ages. You'd think, from its modern exterior design, that the building is a set of new quiet townhouses, or maybe a three-storied mansion with a conventional parking lot. Accordingly, I would say the care home isn't overly clinical in appearance.

As the glass doors shut behind, you might see Billy rolling around in her wheelchair. Her husband was a sailor; she asks me of his whereabouts every evening and waits for his red boat to come ashore. I always tell her not to worry and to join us for the afternoon recreational activities, though often, she'll refuse to. Like many of the residents, Billy longs to leave the care home, reunite with her deceased spouse and be liberated from the confinement. As much as I want to convince her to think otherwise, all I can do is make up an excuse for the man's absence and deliver a smile.

If you climb a flight of stairs to your right, you'll discover that Olive likes to roam around the second floor; she is one of few residents that are able to walk without the help of a walker or wheelchair, but she holds my hand anyway because of the limp in her left leg. She and Ivy call me "the nice young lady", yet ask for my name every five minutes, greeting me numerous times in a sitting. When you converse with them, the two ladies seem aspired to reminisce about their past, as if they are telling a day's-old story. Olive is a little more cheerful than Ivy, who in contrast is willing to acknowledge her short temper and refers to herself as "Poison Ivy." Surely, you'd laugh at her sweet sense of humor.

I'll admit that it took me quite some time to realize that each resident had a disorder; most commonly Parkinson's, Alzheimer's or dementia, or a physical disability, or a combination of both. Upon my realization, I started to smile purposely to liven up their spirits, but I soon found that my courtesy became genuine. It remains unknown to me how the warmth I provide them can return to me in a way that reveals a different, much more pleasant world from the bizarre society we live in.

My hours of contemplation are usually held short when I remind myself to conclude Debussy's *Deux Arabesques* on the rec department's Steinway & Sons piano. And just like every other day, you'll find that I end my shift waving goodbye to the residents with the same smile, looking forward to another day to spend at the home on the other side of my world.

## English Bay

*Danielle Davie, Burnaby North Secondary*

"I tell you, we ought to fix all those gay people, it just isn't right to let them act like that," my father said, ignoring all of the angry glances from the people passing us along the sea wall.

"Dad," I whispered, embarrassed, "you can't say that sort of stuff... that's what's not right."

He mumbled something under his breath and continued walking alongside me as a crisp breeze caressed our faces. It only took the short distance from Lost Lagoon to Second Beach for us to disagree about something, yet again. I remember when we used to agree on everything, and we were closer than anyone thought a teenage girl could be with her dad, but some way or another time seemed to have gotten between us and created a space that neither of us could cross. English Bay seemed to be a more manageable distance than that between my father and me, so I resolved to stay silent and just listen to the water lapping against the seawall until we reached the car to drive home.

"You know Tessie," my father said softly, but clearly, giving me the impression that he'd thought for a while about what he was about to say, "you used to believe the things I told you, you used to trust that what I said had value, and you used to trust me too."

"I know that, and I do trust you, but the thing is, I don't always agree with what you say." The words came out of my mouth before I could do anything to stop them, but it was the truth. I had found myself thinking a lot more lately and drawing my own conclusions, instead of relying on the opinions of my father. "It's just that you don't really consider anything new Dad, you liked things the way they were when you were growing up and that is your definition of the "right" way to do things." My voice wavered slightly and I wished I had just stayed silent like I had planned, but he didn't try to cut me off as he normally would have, had I made him mad, so I continued. "I know that gay people might make you uncomfortable, but what I'm having a hard time understanding is why it should matter to you. It's the same thing as skin colour: you don't get to choose it, you can't change it, and ultimately it doesn't define you as a person but it is part of who you are and there is nothing anybody can do – including you – to "fix" it." And as I exhaled, I felt my eyes beginning to water.

"Tess you don-"

"I'm sorry Dad, it's not something that I get to choose." I stammered, trying as hard as I could to fight back tears. The fog horn from a tugboat in the distance brought me back to the now crowded seawall. I could see Denman Street in the distance and tried to focus on reading all of the shop signs to keep the tears from falling. I snuck a glance at my dad, but he pulled me into his embrace before I could study his expression. He held me there as I caught my breath, and although I hadn't meant for it to happen like this – or at all for that matter, there was nothing I could do to change it.

The breeze picked up as we continued our walk in silence, as if it was trying to push my father farther away than I already had. The slow lull of the tiny waves beside me suddenly reminded me of the sinking feeling in my gut and the weight of knowing I would never be able to take back those words.

"Tess" my dad said, softly interrupting my thoughts and bringing me out of my head "there is nothing that needs to be fixed about you." And, with his hand extended towards me, we continued past the throngs of people on Denman and back to where we had started our day.

## The Good in the Bad

*Justine Hansen, Burnaby North Secondary*

My grandfather was born the weakest of his family. When he left home, he became an empty, selfish man who beat his wife and three children when upset. My mother went to sleep every night wondering if she'd be alive the next morning, and woke up every morning wondering if she'd find her mother dead. This continued for fifteen years before the Taiwanese family immigrated to Canada. My grandfather said it was because he wanted better opportunities for his children. My mother said it was because of the political issues in Taiwan. I think he was trying to run from himself.

Things didn't improve in Canada, though. One day, my aunt became fed up with my grandfather's temper and violence, and my grandmother's refusal to report him. My aunt called the police. My grandfather was charged, and forced to attend classes aimed to control anger. His new police record was his burden of shame.

Life improved. It wasn't until many years later, when I was five, that we got the call. My mother put down the phone, an unreadable expression on her face, and stated: "We're going to the hospital."

I remember being very confused. Much of the family was huddled around the cool turquoise hospital bed which carefully held my sleeping grandfather. I was later told what had happened. The anger had found its way back inside him. He had begged my grandmother to kill him, and when she refused, he threatened to stab her. She had called the emergency, and when they had arrived, my grandfather had a major heart attack. He was rushed to the hospital moments later.

As I looked down on my peaceful grandfather, I thought about the person I knew.

I thought about the time he pointed at an old photograph, and with his hand on my shoulder said, "You know who that is? That's your grandmother. Isn't she beautiful? She is so beautiful."

Or the countless times he said, "Thank your grandmother for her food. Nobody cooks better than she does. Thank people for their wonderful qualities."

Or the lessons he preached as he looked at my mother and said to me, "Your mother works very hard, and she does amazing things. Always work hard to be the best person possible."

And finally, "Never love yourself too much. Always love others. Always love."

My grandfather spent half his life loving only himself. He then spent many years hating himself, fighting with himself. Finally, he spent his breath preaching to others on how to--essentially--avoid being like him.

At five, I didn't understand how so many people could worry so much about the life of someone who caused them so much hurt. It wasn't until many years later that I understood how my grandfather transformed. He realized he could no longer love the person he was, so he tried his best to love and teach those around him.



# Tamed

*Emily Hsiao, Burnaby North Secondary*

## NINETEEN

*She tried not to think of how as her grandfather sank into his castle of pillows, his life was sinking with him while his aged fingers rubbed nostalgia into the back of her hand.*

*"You know, dear, when you were younger, you were a—*

## FIVE

She ran through the streets in her brother's hand-me-down; each rip on the cloth was torn with her best memories. Her feet were bare, and her hair was suitable shelter for stray birds, but thoughts of stopping did not exist in her mind of dreams. She ran on, as fast as her little feet could carry her, to the oak tree in the middle of her favourite park. She erupted into giggles upon arriving at the tree. She threw her head back and spun, listening to the songs of the birds high above her head, admiring the azure sky peeking through tender green leaves, taking in the last whispers of summer. As the gentle August wind washed over her body, she beamed and let it carry her onto her next adventure.

## EIGHT

Her body craved the sun that was shining brightly outside on such a beautiful day; her feet itched to feel dirt beneath them, mushed between her toes. Yet her mind did not allow her to stop. Her feet still pressed the pedals beneath them, her body still swayed to the piano's voice as her fingers danced airily across the keys.

The last decrescendo echoed through the theatre before the audience erupted into applause. She heard the compliments on her performance, saw the judges nodding their heads in approval, felt her mother's icy eyes in the midst of it all, observing, speculating, planning.

## SEVENTEEN

She told her mother during breakfast on a Sunday morning.

"So..." she paused, waiting for her mother to look up. She didn't. "I got a letter from that music school you want me to go to. They say I'm in."

Her mother answered as she scanned through the newspaper for interesting titles, "Congratulations, sweetheart, I knew you would make it."

## TWENTY-ONE

"He's a young violinist that's already gaining recognition from major conductors." Her mother handed her a picture, "I think you would like him."

The picture showed a handsome man with sun-kissed skin, chocolate eyes, and a charming smile. She looked up and saw her mother arch a sharp eyebrow.

"Okay," she said, "I'll meet him."

## THIRTY-NINE

She smiled as their energetic children tackled the world-famous violinist to the ground. Her husband was laughing with joy but also wincing in pain because the twins had decided that their father would make a fantastic trampoline.

She leaned back against the bark of her favourite tree, listening to the songs of the birds, admiring the azure sky peeking through tender green leaves, taking in the last whispers of summer. As the gentle August wind tangled memories into her silken hair, she dreamed of going on an adventure once again.

## NINETEEN

*—wild child, darling. A wild child."*

## D'où Nous Venons

*Mingyo Kim, École Moscrop Secondaire*

Il se mit contre le mur, les mains secouant et réussissant à peine à tenir son fusil. Le plafond tremblait avec le bruit orageux des explosions et des coups de feu assourdissants. En reprenant son souffle, il sortit de sa poche une ancienne photo de sa famille; ses parents se tenaient debout derrière lui, leurs yeux si tendres envers ses garçons, et il tenait la main son grand frère, avec un grand sourire naïf. Maintenant, il s'appelait Soldat Matthew Dubois, et il se trouvait en plein milieu de la guerre. Devant lui marchaient les caporaux Mercier et Lambert, ainsi que le sergent Dufour, celui qui menait l'équipe à travers l'énorme tunnel souterrain qui menait au camp ennemi.

Après avoir marché dans la boue à travers le noir aveuglant, ils arrivèrent finalement au camp. Les soldats ennemis ignoraient complètement leurs arrivés, et fumaient avec leurs amis en paix, leurs armes à peine accessibles. L'équipe s'avança silencieusement comme des rats envahissant les égouts, et les caporaux accompagnés du sergent les poignardèrent de derrière, afin d'être vus. En avançant pour un bout de temps, l'équipe fit face à de nombreux corridors. Le sergent, pour ne pas gaspiller du temps, ordonna à l'équipe de se séparer et de prendre chacun un de ces corridors. Les caporaux Mercier et Lambert tapèrent le dos de Dubois pour lui dire bonne chance.

Matthew prit le corridor à gauche. Avant de marcher, il observa l'obscurité de ce corridor. Il pouvait voir une ou deux torches allumées, mais elles n'étaient guère suffisantes pour allumer l'espace infiniment noir. Cette obscurité mystérieuse semblait émettre des cris d'angoisse et de douleur horribles. Il continua sa marche quand même comme un brave soldat. Il procéda, méthodiquement, se forçant à voir malgré l'obscurité complète. Il pouvait entendre des cris horribles de plus en plus clairs. Son cœur commença à battre rapidement, et arrêta soudainement quand son front frappa quelque chose de dur. C'était une porte.

Il l'ouvra doucement, son cœur palpitant, et trouva le dos d'un soldat ennemi, complètement inconscient d'une présence intrusive. Il était blond, de petite taille, et semblait jeune, l'âge d'un adolescent. La main de Dubois se dirigea vers son poignard, mais son cœur, son cœur doux, ne pouvait pas prendre la vie de ce jeune apparemment innocent. Dubois siffla à la place, et le jeune se retourna. Ses yeux bleus et clairs s'aggrandirent avec un regard perçant. Sa réaction immédiate était de se lancer sur Dubois, prêt à se battre jusqu'à la mort.

Dubois, agile en combat, réussit à l'immobiliser. Il le lança par terre, et ensuite pressa ses genoux contre sa poitrine. Il dit au jeune, qui essayait de toutes ses forces de le résister: «Écoute, jeune garçon. Ce n'est pas de mon intention de te tuer, et il ne serait pas sage de ta part d'essayer de me tuer non plus. Tes compagnons sont morts, mon équipe a déjà réussi à envahir cette place. Il faut que tu m'écoutes, si tu veux vivre.» Toutefois, le jeune résistait encore. Voyant qu'il avait besoin d'une nouvelle mesure, il sortit son poignard et le mit contre son cou. «Tu veux mourir, c'est ça? Pas très intelligent, celui-ci. C'est quoi ton nom? Dis-le!» Le garçon répondit, avec une détermination têtue: «Je n'ai pas de nom.» Devenant de plus en plus désespéré, il continua, pressant son poignard: «Mon nom, c'est Matthew Dubois. Mes parents m'ont nommé après mon ancêtre qui a perdu sa vie pour la paix de son peuple. Ils espéraient que je vivrais comme lui, et c'est pour cela que je t'aide maintenant. Alors, dis-moi, quel est ton nom?» Soudainement, les yeux du garçon s'aggrandirent. Il resta surpris pour un moment, mais il retourna ses yeux sanglotants à Dubois et dit, finalement: «Mon nom est Tristan.»

Tristan raconta à Dubois son passé. Il n'était qu'un enfant de sept ans quand ses parents ont été forcés de le faire déménager ailleurs. Ses parents étaient trop pauvres même pour le nourrir, et son village n'était plus sécuritaire à cause de la guerre. Avant de partir, les derniers mots de ses parents étaient: «Ton nom est Tristan. N'oublie jamais ton nom, car c'est le nom que nous aimons, et aimerons jusqu'au dernier jour de nos vies.» Toutefois, pendant son voyage, il fut capturé par l'armée ennemie et transformé en monstre sauvage. Dubois, surpris par l'histoire, serra dans ses mains Tristan qui pleurait comme un enfant.

Soudain, la porte s'ouvrit. C'était Lambert; il était venu pour vérifier si Dubois allait bien. Ravi de voir son compagnon encore vivant, Dubois courut vers lui, sans surveiller son poignard. Dubois, dans sa tentative de présenter Tristan à Lambert, leur demanda de se serrer la main. Lambert hésita, ne sachant pas s'il pouvait lui faire confiance. Au même moment, Tristan, avec un mouvement prompt, poignarda Lambert dans le cou. Lambert saisit la coupure noire et profonde avec sa main, pour arrêter en vain la vie de s'en évader violemment. Matthew, dévasté de ce qui se passa, chercha son poignard, seulement pour se rendre compte qu'il était dans la main de Tristan. En ayant entendu le cris de Lambert, le caporal Mercier et le sergent Dufour arrivèrent, mais Tristan prit rapidement le fusil de Lambert de sa poche et les fusillèrent en un instant, comme s'ils n'étaient que de mouches. À ce moment-là, des renforts d'ennemis arrivèrent, et appellèrent le garçon : «Samuel?» Le garçon se retourna vers Matthew, fit un sourire diabolique, et tira sur son corps sans cesse. Matthew tomba comme une feuille d'automne, ses jambes devinrent trop délicates pour le soutenir, et la photo de famille, teinte de son sang, tomba doucement de sa main.

## The Day the Music Died

*Andrew Leong, Burnaby North Secondary*

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted..." Then, the room fell silent except for the sniffles that echoed off the wooden panels high above us.

"Why can't I cry?" I asked myself. I lift my head up, heavy with guilt. I looked towards my mother. A tear rolled off her cheek, the cold fluorescent lighting shimmering off of it. *Swish swish*. I spun around in my corduroy pants, looking for people I knew.

Most of the women were crying, handkerchiefs and tissues in hand. Most of the men bowed their heads down in order to preserve their masculinity. Even my dad, who was the strongest man I knew at the time, was sniffing. I could see my second cousins at the front. They were crying the hardest. "Of course," I thought, "It is their grandfather up there after all." Up at the very front was a closed black wooden casket, polished like a piano. To the right of the casket was a photograph of my cousins' grandfather, framed in black. It was an old photograph. He looked much younger. Next to the photo was a man behind a podium, staring at me. I realized I was interrupting the man, but everyone was looking at me already.

"Shh, Matthew, sit down." My mum whispered at me with her scolding face on.

"Huh? Oh." I said in a voice louder than it should've been. More heads turned towards me, their hawk-like eyes telling me to quiet down. "Huh? Oh." I whispered to my mum. *Swish swish*.

Red, green and white decorations accented the house as my uncle welcomed us in. "Merry Christmas!" My uncle said, giving my dad a bear hug. His hair had become greyer, but he still had the energy and spirit to host our family Christmas gathering. "Good to see you." My uncle said while hugging my mum. "Hey there, bud." Ruffling my hair with his coarse hands.

"Merry Christmas!" I smiled, showing off my pearly whites. I handed him a candy cane from a box I always carried around to Christmas gatherings. The smell of Christmas turkey filled my nose as I stepped into the house. The floor was spotless. Perfect for sliding around in socks and pretending I'm skating.

"Hey, Matthew, why don't you hand out candy canes to everyone?" My mum suggested. I slid around in my socks, handing out candy canes to everyone. I slid into the living room, past my cousin's family portrait in a black frame, and past their piano, which looked freshly polished.

"Hmm, that's weird. He's here every year." I thought. I slid to look for my cousins. "Where's your grandfather?" I asked them.

Dismayed, the older one looked at me and said, "Matt, he's gone." That's when it hit me. It was like someone punched me in the chest. My eyes began to water and shortly after, I was sitting in a puddle of tears. He's gone. Forever.

## Why Sashimi is Served in Nine Pieces

Melanie Liu, Burnaby North Secondary

There it was; sitting on a pillowy bed of white daikon radish, it gleamed a deep coral red, cut with the precision of a sword master, I-

"Miss, are you finished with that?" the waitress interjected. Still cluttered with the thoughts of the sashimi, my brain slowly processed her question, as my mother swiftly swooped the last piece of wild salmon sashimi onto my plate.

My eyes began to twinkle and with my eyes still glued to the sashimi, I replied "Thanks mom!" I didn't hesitate to plop the sashimi into my mouth and devour it as if it was the last dish I'd ever eat.

My mother watched me as I exaggeratedly chewed with my eyes closed. "Is it really that great?" she teased and gave me a cute eye roll.

"Of course", I countered, since nothing gave me more pleasure than indulging on my favorite dish in the world.

Back at home, we parted to our rooms for the night, and as I sluggishly began organizing the mound of clutter situated on my desk, I overheard my mom FaceTiming my aunt in her room. Though I could not pinpoint any specific phrases or words, I knew it was something along the lines of the struggles and hardships my mother was facing at work and at home. She vented to my aunt how I was too young to comprehend the weight of her burden and that she must endure it alone.

I suddenly felt the extent of the immense barrier isolating ourselves, and yet it was only paper-thin walls that stood in between us. A whirlwind of questions bombarded my head. *"Should I pretend I didn't hear it? If she didn't talk to me about it, it must not have been intended for my ears right? However, there must be a reason why I heard, but what can I do anyways?"*

During the next week, I gradually picked up more chores and performed a variety of small tasks, ranging from making her favorite red tea, to offering to organize her documents. However, I felt as though I was doing it more for myself than my mom. The tasks felt meaningless and insignificant in comparison to the bigger problem I was trying to avoid. By performing these small tasks, I had allowed myself to write off my guilt rather than confront the actual problem.

Soon enough it was Friday again, which meant another mother-daughter night out. I began initiating my plan by probing the sensitive topic to see her reaction. Soon enough, I had built enough courage to say "Mom, I know you're having a hard time, is everything okay?" In place of offering to help, I understood the best thing I could do for my mom was to listen and let her know I supported her no matter what.

"Sorry, Miss are you finished with that?" the waitress timidly asked. Swiftly and effortlessly, I placed the last piece of sashimi onto my mother's plate.

"Yes we're finished, thank you."

# He Did it Out of Love

*Tiana Wang, Burnaby North Secondary*

He stared at the menu board one last time, while rehearsing his order. His palms were coated in cold sweat. He had never been so nervous to order at a fast food restaurant before.

He promptly walked up to the first till as the teenage girl at the counter shouted, "Next customer in line!"

"I want Big Mac meal with Coke please" he stuttered, despite his previous preparation in line. His Chinese accent was still heavy after having spent only four months in Canada.

"What? I can't even understand what you're saying, like, speak clearer or learn better English," she spat harshly.

He looked down.

Back in Shenyang, he did not have to put up with ignorant minimum wagers like her. He was a wealthy and well-educated government official, who had many bowing down to him. He had been living his childhood dream of becoming prosperous and successful. Of course, it all ended when he decided to immigrate to Canada after his daughter was born. He knew that the education system in China was too demanding of children and aware of the high suicide rates of adolescents in Shenyang. He also knew that there were so many more opportunities for his child in Canada. So he traded in his first class status for one that required him to be treated as if he were the dirt that others walked upon.

He inhaled deeply, "Can I get Big Mac meal with a Coke to drink?" he repeated. This time more confident.

"Oh, you want a beeg mek meal?" she mocked, not being able to pass up the opportunity to discourage a man whose mother tongue was evidently *not* English. She punched in his order and directed him to his left before murmuring, "Stupid immigrants. Why go to a restaurant where you can't even order properly?"

Despite the fact that he had barely understood her remark, he did understand that what he did, and all the suffering that he went through, would be worth it.

His flashback was interrupted by the jingling of keys. It was two a.m. and he was waiting for his daughter to return home. Now sixteen and probably slightly intoxicated, she stumbled in the front door. He did not raise his voice as he had been a teenager once as well. He did, however, ask her where and how she spent her night.

To which she responded, "Leave me alone dad! Can't I go out without you badgering me all the time? It's not like I'm stupid, I know what I'm doing."

Little did she know that he had stayed up all night worrying about her. He had wanted to make sure that his little girl made it home all right. He did everything in his power to keep her safe.

"You're honestly the worst dad ever. Get off my case," she snapped. Her words hurt just as much, if not more, than those of the McDonald's employee sixteen years prior.

Little did she know that he is one of the *best* dads ever. He had stopped living his dreams, for a human who he had only known for a few weeks. He had thrown away a life of diamonds, to pick up one of stone. Why? Not being able to foresee the comments she would spit so obliviously, he did it out of love.

## Protection

*Jessica Su, Burnaby North Secondary*

I shudder at the feeling of the breeze hitting my skin. Grasping the wool of my grandfather's sweater, I swiftly wrap it around myself, trying to bring the feeling of him closer to me. Remembering the roughness of his hands, guiding me through the hardships I faced in life, a stray tear slides down my face, forming a pool at the corner of my mouth.

The trees sway around me as I sit down on the grass. Surrounded by the feeling of death, I lift my hands up to touch the engravings on the stone that read the words that have scarred my heart. Taking a deep breath I close my eyes, trying to remember the last time I heard my grandfather's deep throaty laugh.

The rocking chair creaked back and forth as I sat securely on his lap. With the fireplace going, I remember a feeling of warmth and happiness surrounding me, as I quietly listened to the sound of his heartbeat going, *thu-thump thu-thump thu-thump*. He was wearing his favourite wool sweater that tickled my nose, making me giggle all the time. I remember how he rubbed my back soothingly, as if it would take all my troubles away, and it did.

I was enveloped in his love, from the moment I was born, and not a day went by where he did not express it. I remember that night, sitting by the fireplace, swaying back and forth to the hums of his voice. I remember craning my head back, to get a better look at him as I asked him why he wore a wool sweater, wondering if it was itchy for him to wear. He glanced down at me with a small smile on his face as he told me,

"No, my little moon cake, this wool sweater is far from being itchy at all. It actually is my protective blanket to keep me out of harm's way. To keep me safe."

I looked up at him, as his words went through my mind and asked, "Do I get a safe blanket too grandpa?"

Laughter filled the room as my grandpa held me close with a smile on his face.

"Would you like your own protective blanket my little moon cake?" he asked, propping me up onto his knee.

I vigorously nodded my head, eager to be just like him. He laughed once more before setting me down on the floor. I still remember how he slowly removed his wool sweater off his shoulders and draped it over mine. He made sure it was fastened on right as I looked up at him feeling confused. He shook his head and said,

"This is my protective blanket for you my little moon cake. As your grandpa, I will do all in my power to keep you out of harm's way."

He smiled at me once more before taking my hand and leading me to the car. As the car pulled out I waved to my grandpa farewell, as he blew me a kiss good-bye.

Hearing my mother call my name from the car, I take one last glance at the stone, that now represents my grandfather, and kiss it once more farewell. Tightening the wool sweater around me, I feel my grandfather's protectiveness surround me as I walk ahead to the car.



# 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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