



YOUNG POETS

2021 AWARD WINNERS

From the Director

Over the last 17 years the Jackson District Library has presented the annual "Poets Among Us" Young Poets Contest in order to encourage student authors to express their creativity.

Each year the judges are impressed with the variety of topics, poetic style and expression seen in the range of entries. Again this year, students from all types of school environments and all grade levels, took the time to enter 479 poems in the contest.

On behalf of the Jackson District Library board and staff, I would like to thank each student for sharing their poem. Our outstanding panel of judges again had their work cut out for them and I thank them for their service to the community. And the contest would not be successful without the support of parents, families, teachers, librarians and staff from our Jackson County schools and homeschoolers.

With support from our sponsors we are able to publish this booklet of the winning poems as well as provide certificates and prizes for our award-winning authors.

Please take time to review these award-winning submissions on the following pages and offer your congratulations to the student authors.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sara Tackett".

Sara Tackett, Director
Jackson District Library

Acknowledgements

Judges

Dr. Ann Green, Chairwoman
Elissa Alden
Asa Fleming
Val Peterson
Autumn Rose Wood
Martha Petry
Joe Scarpino

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NOTE: We regret that we were unable to reproduce all original formatting; however, care has been taken to reproduce the poems as they were originally submitted.

First Place

The Horse

by Vivian Klos

Sharp Park Academy

I sat on a horse,
I walked her around,
I held on tight.
Then she stood still,
She made me feel ok.

Second Place

Buddy

by Bodie Miller

Bean Elementary

I have a dog named Buddy
who likes to get into putty.
He loves to play
With his family,
and he's always a bit nutty.

First Place

Summer Rides

by Hattie Kennedy

Queen of the Miraculous Medal School

“Whoa...easy girl.”
 The sun is setting low,
 Midnight black mane
 Flowing, dancing, calming.
 Warm summer evenings.
 Tall green grass swishing.
 “Easy girl.”
 Take us home.

Second Place

Baby Brother

by Evelyn Spradlin

Sharp Park Academy

I have a brother his name is Grayson we call him Gray
 He likes to eat his hands and slobber all day
 He is happy in the morning when I wake and say hi
 I go off to school and he wonders why
 He likes to go on walks with Mommy and me
 We race and ride and we look at the trees
 At bedtime I read him a book Mommy puts him to bed
 We say goodnight sleepy head

Third Place

Chickadee

by Quinn Ross

Queen of the Miraculous Medal School

I am a chickadee
 hehehe
 I eat nuts in a tree, hehe.

First Place

Hills and Meadows

by Isabella Hurst

Queen of the Miraculous Medal School

Listening to the small birds tweet,
the smell of colorful flowers so sweet.
A soft picnic blanket is where I eat,
sandwiches and apples are a tasty treat.
Fresh breeze blowing in my hair,
trees with orange leaves everywhere.
Tag with friends, we like to play,
blue skies, puffy clouds, beautiful day.
Rolling down the hill is fun,
my cheeks are warm from the sun.
Tall grass in the meadow, buzzing bees,
I love to hear the rustling leaves.
My friends and I, we need to run,
but we are happy to see the shining sun.

Second Place

Are Unicorns Real?

by Ava Manchester

Homeschool

Are unicorns real? Well, I don't know.
Some people say, "They are. They certainly are."
While others say, "They aren't. They certainly aren't."
I have never chosen which one to believe,
So I just say they are both!

Third Place

Pterodactyl

by Danette Soos

Northwest Early Elementary

large, amazing
hunting, flying, swooping
eggs, fish, animals, bugs
crunch, munch, gulp
extinct, gone
Pterodactyl

First Place

Looking for Books

by Rosalyn Lemmon

Homeschool

Where should you go to find great books?
Head to the library, that's where I'd look!
Books up high, books down low,
Books, books, from head to toe!
Find the book you need and start to read!
Books about cats that are so cute, and books about playing the flute.
Everywhere you look--

There's a book!

Second Place

The Northern Lights

by Leah Gernand

Jackson Christian Elementary

The Northern Lights
pretty and
colorful,
attracting and swaying,
lovely,
Aurora Borealis.

Third Place

Joy

by Gwen Kneifer

Jackson Christian Elementary

There are many kinds of Joy
Building a snowman Joy
Covid 19 going away Joy
Playing with toys Joy
Cat had kittens Joy
Growing lots of flowers Joy
Sledding every day Joy
There are many kinds of Joy

Honorable Mention

One Last Leopard

by April Ramirez

Homeschool

I saw something spotted in the forest
then I saw two sparkled and marbled, glowing eyes peering into a magic
world that no one knows
Where did the magic go in our world?
Snow falls silently on the ground like the silent footsteps of a leopard
one last leopard is in the world and I saw water gather up in the
golden eyes
looking out of a different tree now

Honorable Mention

MLK, JR

by Alex Baxter

Jackson Christian Elementary

Deciding to make changes

Reading the Bible

Everyone together

Amazing

Making the law change

Honorable Mention

Clyde

by Trenton Willis

Parma Elementary

I have a new favorite pet,
He is cute and slimy and a little wet,
Short and squatty and not too long,
Clyde is a Pac-man frog.

First Place

Day Dream

by Molly Hunt
Townsend Elementary

Kind and hopeful, his skin tone is like a sunset.
Always there when the sun sets and rises.
I know him in and out.
He's so loyal that he will do anything for you.
And if you look into his deep eyes you will see a whole fantasy.
During the day he has fun all the time and is never bored.
Wears light clothes and soft orange sneakers.
Hangs out by the beach sitting on the dock.
His voice, so sweet, is sweeter than candy.
Loves bedtime because that's when
His fantasy becomes real.

Second Place

Chicken

by Marco Ybañez
Townsend Elementary

Chicken is awesome.
Awesome at running.
Running to find seeds.
Seeds give him energy.
Energy is what chicken needs to be fast and sneaky.
Sneaky is what chicken needs to be good at hide and seek.
Seeks to find a dancing partner.
Partner to eat with.
With a loud noise.
Noise to wake up friends.
Friends saw a note that said don't try to chase me.

Third Place

Colors

by Breanna Manchester
Homeschool

Colors are bright and dark,
Colors could be just a purple mark,
Colors could be in a spinning wheel,
Colors could be Blue-green or Teal,
All colors come from three,
Red, Blue, and yellow, they fit in
HARMONY.

Honorable Mention

Math

by Casen Khon
Jackson Christian Elementary

I really don't like doing math.
It can turn my mood into wrath.
I really don't like dividing in half,
And it won't make me smile or laugh.

First Place

Mask

by Lauren Jones

Jackson Christian Elementary

I am a mask
You know me for covering you face
My mother is a health inspector
My father is a box of cleaning wipes
I was born in a factory
I live in a box waiting to be bought
My best friend is a washing machine
Because it cleans me up when I'm dirty
My enemy is bad breath
Because I will be forced to smell it
 all day long
I fear the end of Covid
Because I will get thrown away
I love frontline workers
Because they are always using me
 all the time
I dream of getting bought
And getting put on someone's face
 to keep me toasty warm

Second Place

Mr. Fishy

by James Prince

Paragon Charter Academy

He was the best fishy in the world
He was so bright
He was so light
And he always wanted to take a flight
But when he did take that flight he fell
Then he was squashed
Then he was smushed
Then he was mushed
And he always remembered

RIP Mr. Fishy He was a goldfish that fell on the floor and stepped on.
He was the edible goldfish though.

Third Place

The Hugger Bug

by Raina Jacobson

Hanover-Horton Elementary

There was a bug who liked to hug.
He hugged a rug and a red mug.
The hugger bug had a dog
And the dog had a pink frog but the pink frog
didn't like to hug the hugger bug.

Honorable Mention

Nasty Cooked Carrots

by Aaliyah Schenk

Jackson Christian Elementary

Cooked carrots make me cry.
They're something I would never buy.
If I eat one I might die.
I would rather eat a buzzing fly.

First Place

Writing

by Evaine Wentzloff

Queen of the Miraculous Medal School

Hand flying across the page
trying to write down ideas
Hearing the quick scratches of a pencil writing in print
Feeling the firm wood of a pencil as hard as the bond of friendship
or the smooth rubber of a pen as smooth as a lake rock
Inhaling a whiff of fresh notebook paper
Eyes darting back and forth across the page,
reading the words I have written down
The words of a story swirling in my head
The continuous itching to write
Feeling as if
my characters are real
Feeling as if
someone is telling me their life and I am just writing it down
Twists and turns
Cliff hangers and endings
Combining together
to create one big creation
Clutching my notebook tight
holding my dear treasure near
Eraser shavings on my pants
Dull pencils lay on the floor
The trash can filled with crumpled up pieces of paper
My head full of ideas

Second Place

My First Home Run

by Colin Fuller

Queen of the Miraculous Medal School

On the plate,
I witnessed it.
The ball,
Accelerating every second.
Touching the ground,
No vibrations,
Rolling to me.
Dashing,
Charges forcefully.
Leg comes up,
Back down.
Connecting the ball.
Launching perfectly straight.
Not too high,
Not too low.
Soaring fast,
Near the end.
Late like my sleep schedule.
Rapidly running around,
Energetic and determined.
Throwing the ball,
Barely missing
Touching the base,
My first home run.

Third Place

I can, I will

by Cash Cooper

Queen of the Miraculous Medal School

You're in the car,
Straps tight across your shoulders.
Butterflies form in your stomach
When your dad provides you with
Final instructions.
And he thrusts you forwards,
Everything becomes silent.
Alone in your helmet,
Slightly breathing.
Hearing the "click, thud" of the chain
Gripping the gear.

Time seems to slow as you think
"Wait for it, Wait for it."
Handlers yell "Now!"
Flicking the ignition switch,
You feel the car vibrate angrily
As the engine roars to life.

On the track,
Care rumble along,
Drivers like caged animals anticipating
Release.
Even the best drivers are nervous as the radio repeats
"One to go."
Glancing at your sun visor,
Reading your family's motto,
"Ya Gotta Believe!"

Taking a deep breath while reaching the fire line.
You think "I can, I will."
The green flag drops.

First Place

The Storm

by Madisyn O'Neal

Lumen Christi

When hauled by wind
Pounded by rain
of vanquish
Running through
the interdicted greenwood
Being chased by
the dark clouds of prostrate
Coming upon the mirror
Brisk, tender fog awakens
Rushing into the mind
Slashing self-assuredness
into an execrable sleep
the thoughts...
the reaction...
the outcome.
She'd become a wilting flower
Thirsty for water passionate
Passionate for sun

but fog always fades
Colors always nerve
the dark away
Soon the glory of the sun
Ablaze
the thunders of a cloud
always retreat

After the tempest
There's always a rainbow
Under a rainbow stands
a creation...
a rarity...
shining...
the true pot of gold,
Me

Second Place

Keep Going

by Ryli Hammond

Northwest Kidder Middle School

Have you ever heard of perseverance
Perseverance is like a rocket ship
You can't just let it go by itself
You have to guide it to get it to keep going
Perseverance is determining to keep going
To face the setbacks and challenges
So Keep Going Strong
We will fight for it
We will not give up
We will reach our goal
And nothing will stop us
So let us leave behind a country
Better than the one we were left with
Let the world be your motivation
To keep on going
Let the people push you
To reach your goals
Not only so, but we also have glory in our surroundings
Because we know within that produces
Perseverance
Perseverance makes character, character makes hope possible
So let our world have more perseverance in it

Third Place

The Beauty of Life

by Christie Ricketts

Northwest Kidder Middle School

Sometimes I feel like the universe wants me to fail.
like I was made for failure,
like I was made to not succeed.
But after a while I realized
that's not the case at all.

I like to look at life the way I look at stars,
the darkest nights bring out the brightest stars
just like how when you are at your worst,
rock bottom is your breakthrough moment.
But at the end of the day
All you're really looking at is how beautiful the stars are.

Life is a blessing.
and yeah, you have times when you question
Is it even worth it all?
All the pain,
All the pressure,
Just look at it this way:

for every time you cry,
There's an even bigger smile waiting.
for every time there's pain,
there's a recovery waiting that will make you stronger.

That's just the beauty of life.

Honorable Mention

I am a girl who hides how i feel

by Hayley Gardner

Northwest Kidder Middle School

I am a girl who hides how i feel
I wonder if i open up will they judge me
I hear my heart wailing when i say i'm good but i'm really dying inside
I see myself falling apart and breaking down slowly
I want to laugh and smile and not have to fake it
I am a girl who hides how i feel

I pretend everything is fine, that i'm okay, that i don't need help
I feel the gazes of others on the back of my head
I touch the wet cold grass beneath my feet
I worry i will disappoint and never be good enough
I cry when i know i need help but i'm too scared to ask for it
I am a girl who hides how i feel

I understand for people to help you can't hide
I say you have to talk about it to get better
I dream everyone has someone they can be themselves around
and not have to fake it
I try to talk, i try to get help but i never do
I hope that one day we all will be happy with no worries
I am a girl who hides how i feel

First Place

To Walk a Day in Someone Else's Shoes

by Melaina Magnusson
Western Middle School

All my life
I've been told
To walk a day
In someone else's
Shoes.
What about
the people
Without shoes?
Those people
Who walk with
Their bare feet
Covered in dust,
Whose toes are numb
Every winter night,
And burned on the
Summer's pavement?
Those calloused
Feet
With pebbles
Implanted
In skin,
Because of hours
Of
Walking
On gravel.

What about
The people
Who leave
Their shoes
At the door
Of their
Holy place?
Their synagogue.
Their Mosque.
Their Church.

Those who
Experience
Life changing
Moments
Extraordinary
Or
Traumatizing
With their
Bare feet,
Black,
Brown,
White,
Or any shade
In between,
Softly padding
On the ground.

How will we ever
Understand
These people,
Our sisters and brothers,
Our fathers and mothers,
If we only
Walk a day
In their shoes?
Instead,
We should try to
Walk
A day
In their heart,
Their soul,
Their mind,
And maybe then
Someday
We will all
Accept each other
For who we used to be,
Who we are,
And who we will be
In the future.

Second Place

The Text (alphabet poem)

by Morgan Meyerhofer

Lumen Christi Catholic School

A moment of silence before a notification occurs
B uzz
C razy how one little message can change my whole mood
D o I dare to look
E ver so slowly I reach my hand towards my phone just to pull it away
F earfully wondering if it could be a text from him.
G iving my mind the time to overthink and wonder about the text.
H aving hours go by before I get the courage to open it.
I start to reach for my phone
J ust as my mind begins to relax, I see it was a text from him
K inda crazy how my heart skips a beat
L etting myself melt away at the sight of his text
M y heart is so full even though I don't know what the text says
N ow I've given my mind enough time to calm down
O pening the text is what I should do
P utting all my worries and thought away just to open it
Q uasi feelings start to form as I open the text
R eading it as soon as I can
S ometimes a simple text can mean so much
T aking the time to read the text over and over
U nconditionally I start to smile
V ery few things make me smile like his texts do
W hen I go to respond I wonder if he feels the same
X tra thoughts go into my text back
Y ou don't realize how much a person affects you
Z ooming my phone away after responding, waiting for a text back

Third Place

A walk at night on a snow day

by Qianyu Zhang

Western Middle School

Tips of tree branches dipped in milk,
The world covered in a blanket of white silk.
Shuffling of coats echoed in the dark,
Snow piled on the edges of the park
Each step was a loud crunch,
While catching snowflakes on my tongue.
The frozen swamp appeared in the distance
Climbed upon the ice, legs shivered in resistance
Watching my breath vaporize on this damp and quiet night.

Honorable Mention

Messengers

by Annika Van Fleet
Hanover-Horton Middle School

Context: I usually fold tiny paper airplanes out of sticky notes when I'm bored in class, and sometimes I write messages on them to send to friends. So, this poem is about sending my little messengers to a friend of mine who lives many miles away.

Messengers

My little birdies, go flap your wings
As you are not attached to strings

To find a friend,
a foe, a lover,
Glide from one end
To another

Flow down the Passage
Where Time resides
And open yourself
To find a message inside

Sometimes pictures,
Sometimes blank,
A word or two,
Or filled with ink

To stone and mountain
To river and tree,
Your little wings fly back to me

Over the flowers,
Grass, bugs, and dew,
My little wings
Fly back to you

When the wind is howling
Or the water is still
I wait for you by the window sill

I'll travel worlds, planets,
galaxies and miles
Just to send you a paper smile.

First Place

Did You See Me Cry

by Breanna Lum
Western High School

sometimes i think maybe if i could eat poetry /

- it's too late for this

it would taste like the vanilla cream mama whisks off the top of her coffee
in the mornings / her silver ebony hair wrapped up round bony fingers
and hair ties that have long since given up the ghost /

- hey i think that one's mine
i left it in my back jean pocket
last year before you
got tired of living

sweet like sugar and the mango juice that dribbles down the chins of the
black god boys down at the gas station / their vacant motel eyes sparking
with honeyed, mildew love when they see me and jahaziel / our saccharine
lips stained with blueberry ice and unholiness /

- jahaziel was always prettier

but then / i think / poetry would taste like daddy and his red mulberry
anger when he left mama all those years ago / his cheeks rose-laurel and
flush / he kissed me goodbye / and ithinkithinkithink

- i kinda miss a whole family

poetry would taste like you / the boy in the shade of all those other gods
/ because you didn't like the feel of the sun / it reminded you of the oven
hot scars on your palms and the way your mother wept in the lanai when
your brother had his stomach pumped and you just liked the moon better
and what was so wrong about that?

- nothing.

you wore gold in your ears and you kissed me till i thought the angels in
my head were silly for calling you sin / you always said i was beautiful /
like the haitian poster girls hung up on your bedroom wall / but i don't
know so much about that / not when jahaziel was loving on your best
friend with her wide hips and nepenthe smiles

- i should have listened to
mama when she said
she didn't like you much

and of course poetry must taste like the strawberries in our backyard / the
plump ones that drip juice onto white skirts and hands matted with dirt in
the creases /

- i still remember those days

and i must request that shakespeare taste like summer / like rusted
sprinklers and old finned cars like daddy's and bare feet and lemonade
burst stomachs and sweat on the backs of your knees and smoke from
my uncle's charcoal grill and loud, heavy laughter that sounds like thunder
coming over the palm frond trees and it must taste -

- yes it must

like youth and memory and sugar happiness ringed round lips

i ate poetry today and all it tasted like was paper

Second Place

Chicken and Dumplings

by Zakiyah Holmes
Concord High School

My grandma mixes the butter
and flour
and water together
making the dough as flat as a pancake.
I loved being in the kitchen with her when she cooked.
She lets the chicken boil in the hot steaming water
as she's humming her favorite old school songs.
"Big wheels keep on turning, rollin', rollin'"
Cutting the dumplings in these long rectangles

It starts to smell so good
as she adds seasonings,
paprika and
 pepper and
 parsley.

My mouth waters, my stomach growls.
I sit at the table with my sister
and play with the dough,
watching Grandma roll and drop the dumplings in the broth
one
 by
 one.

It took so long for her to make them,
but the wait was worth it.
She drains the broth from the chicken and dumplings,
adds the cream of mushroom soup.
Perfection.

She stands over me, her eyes proud,
hands me a bowl,
looks down at me while I take my first bite
She smiles as I eat.
It felt like I was surrounded
by warmth and comfort all at the same time.
Chicken and dumplings is love.

Third Place

Journey of a Lifetime

by Aria McGinty

Pioneers Homeschool Co-Op

Journey of a Lifetime

Deadly heights forbid me to climb, and yet still I mount.
The path feels like it has no end, and the steps I cannot count.
The things I climb, I can't discern; my sight is much too blurred.
My ears long to hear the sound, of a loving and comforting word.

I'm climbing, climbing, always climbing, treading both grass and stones.
The landscapes range from gentle pastures, to canyons full of bones.
Walking at ease does not last long, and such occasions are rare,
For mostly I seem to hang from cliffs, with evil in the air.

Now, in the twilight of my life, the precipice has a gap.
Home is on the other side; I know without a map.
A rope is strung from cliff to cliff –is it fast? I cannot say.
Far below the waters foam, what if my bridge should fray?

My first steps are taken with care, I almost hold my breath,
For one ounce of weight applied in folly, would mean a certain death.
My foot slipped blindly in the dark; I grab for the rope but miss.
Only One can hear my terrified cries, as I plunge to the horrid abyss.

By now I have fallen a thousand feet, with a thousand left to go.
Will there be anything left of me when I land in the waters below?
A pool of blood, and a red-stained rope, to be instantly swept away,
But I cried to heaven, with all my being, to spare my life this day!

At once my feet were on the ground; the mountains disappeared.
I cried the tears of one redeemed, gone was the end I feared!
I ran along, --no walking now! The land was totally flat.
Stay! Ahead there was a gentle swell, with a ladder propped up on that.

It was composed of seven rungs, of smooth and polished wood.
At once I knew that at the top was the best of everything good.
My tearstained eyes at last saw light, in the land where no one is ill,
And if you happen to be seeking me, you'll find me up there still!

First Place

Sin Himself

by Andre Wielenga
Western High School

I had a dream that I was in a fight
Against a beast who wore a velvet cloak
I couldn't see his face; there was no light
I asked him who he was; at last he spoke

He said that he was sin in human form
That he was lust and envy, greed and pride
That he was hatred, mighty as a storm
And that his midnight cloak was our dark side

I felt compelled to stand up for the truth
And to reveal the monster's wicked face
To preserve love and right, beauty and youth,
By sending him back into death's embrace

I tore the cloak away, appalled to see
The face of Sin himself looked just like me

Second Place

The Song of My Life

by Marissa Benn
Napoleon High School

The early morning silence on a cold winter day is like a breath of fresh air to my soul.
I love the peace and serenity that come with being in nature alone.
It gives life a meaning bigger than me or you,
It shows that there is more to us than we presume.
It provides a glimpse of this gift God has given us,
To live another day in this beautiful world He made for us.

Life has a melody of friends laughing together,
The lyrics are that of a loved one speaking,
Altogether it creates a harmony unlike any other,
One that gets played over and over as a memory.

Third Place

A Simple Ball Game

by Mariah Van Fleet

Hanover-Horton High School

A small ball game played in the park
To the major league fields
Hoping for a moment
The racism will yield

Once believed impossible
For a black man to play with whites
Jackie Robinson stepped up to the plate
To fight for his rights

Every time he swung
And every time he crossed the home plate
Another step forward
For the black race

Jackie wasn't playing for just himself
But for everyone watching across the US
He was changing history
To hopefully progress

Honorable Mention

i have a dream too

by Summer Barnaby

Hanover-Horton High School

I have a dream that one day our nation will pick up the broken pieces
I have a dream that one day we will take our masks off
I have a dream that we will be able to have high school experiences
I have a dream that I will get into a good college
I have a dream today
I have a dream that one day online will come to an end
I have a dream today
I have a dream that one day it won't be busy work
But learning something new
This is my hope and dream that one day
we will go back to the old but new normal
This will be the day when the country comes together
And beat this pandemic

Honorable Mention

Pink

by Melanie Wells

Hanover-Horton High School

In spite of all of the colors,
Instead of all of the hues
Despite all of the others, you're the one I choose.
Past all of the reds, past all of the blues
Among the bright colors most wouldn't choose.
About you pink, I don't understand
Inside of my room, you can tell I'm a big fan.
Against my walls and on my clothes,
Up my curtains, why? Nobody knows.
Behind my door, you shine bright
During my dreams, I think of you in the night.
Since I've grown, you're still the color I choose
Beyond my eyes, you're the thought I can never lose.
Beside my mirror, there you lay
In my heart on the brightest of days.
Against my cheeks, you brighten up
In my brain, you're as cute as a pup.
Of all of the colors,
Across the giant rainbow, in the sky
Upon my mind, pink, you're my favorite, I cannot lie.

Honorable Mention

I Miss You

by Isabella Frey

Michigan Center Jr/Sr High School

Sometimes when I think of you I feel nothing
Other times, when I'm dreary from the day
I think of you and feel it in the depths of my stomach
A feeling just like I've lost you all over again
It's been so long, yet I feel this often
It hurts dearly
To see you living so happily
Without me
You are my home
And I am homesick
For I have not been home in many many weeks
Somewhere in your heart and in your deep blue eyes
You must know I still miss you
I will always
If I could look into your eyes one last time
I would gaze all of the love I have for you into them
Maybe then you'd understand
My thoughts, my pain
You'd understand how my heart aches to hear your voice
The way my salty tears run down my face and trail down to my lips
All because I miss you
I miss you

First Place

I Am From: Who I Am

by Hayden Ryan
Springport High School

I am cigarette burns on mom's blanket edges.
I am from the thought of eviction weighing like rocks on my shoulders.
I am from rehab centers with cold floors and lukewarm meals, grey as the clouds.
I am not the left behind ashes of your destructive tongue.

I am anger at my mother for abandoning her kid but not her offender.
I am from needing government help to survive, canned food and the drug scene.
I am from broken piggy banks and stolen money for her stimulants.
I am not going to continue the family tradition of choosing addiction.

I am holding the tears in my hand approaching those casket boxes.
I am from cancer spelled in the crossword puzzles at grammas with aunt Jean.
I am from my nana taking care of me my whole life to reversing the roles at the end of hers.
I am not finished grieving the emptiness of my grandest parents.

I am Sunday morning coffee, horse riding and maggot-lined kitchen floors.
I am from the scariest night terrors any parent or child can dream of, but,
I am from real life experiences and lessons learned that no one else my age has access to.
I am not defined by my family or upbringing, it is a part of me but not who I am.

Second Place

They say, I say

by Emily DeGrie

Hanover-Horton High School

They say, I say
They say I am weak-willed.
I say
I am confident and able.

They say I'm not strong,
I say
I know how to prove them wrong.
So
Don't judge me by my favorite song.
They say I am weak-willed
I say
I am confident and able.

They say I'm not
Going to make it far
I say
Stop stealing the light of my star.
Instead
I'm gonna to show them I can go far
To achieve my hopes and dreams.

Third Place

Beauty of the Night

by Lacey Girardin
Concord High School

I glance to the tiny clock on top my wrist, It says about six.
I look outside to see a rising moon. When on the other side of the
sky the sun sets like a deflated balloon.
The colors in the sky make a stunning sight. with orange, a pale
pink, and a yellow so bright.
The shimmering beams of light shine through my window, almost
making me blind.
The breath taking day sky could turn a blinds man eye.
As the blistering sun continues its way down, shadows appear
behind the buildings of our town.
The suns bright setting light, fades away into the glistening night.
Behind the hills and the trees, the sun begins its slumbering sleep.
Its not just the sky that tells us its night, when the outside becomes
dour, here come the street lights.
They light up the streets, where the black cat walks, if you look
closely enough you can see it creep around the blocks.
Small yellow lights blink and blink, while the black cat's claws clink
and clink on the concrete.

Honorable Mention

Jackie Robinson

by Victoria Morris

Hanover-Horton High School

Jackie was a warrior
But instead a sword a bat
Jackie had courage
And a lot of it at that
Jackie stood for freedom
And stood for what was right
For a nation who needed
Peace and not a fight
Jackie stole the hearts
Of blacks and whites and all
Now his name was up in light
In what we call the famous hall
Now when we go to the field
To go and play some ball
We hope we represent Jackie
And what he did for all

First Place

Class of 2021

by Quinn Davison
Columbia Central High School

It's my senior year.

August 26th.

Instead of sitting at a desk in a classroom, I'm sitting alone in my bedroom.

I open my laptop to begin my work.

It's the best year of high school, they say.

It's my senior year.

September 18th.

I only go in person for my 7th hour.

"Over your nose."

"Keep to one side of the hallway."

"Put your mask on correctly."

"Social distance."

It's quite the adjustment, but I'm learning.

It's the best year of high school, they say.

It's my senior year.

October 9th.

I performed for the first time on the football field.

"A late start to the season is better than no start," I tell myself.

I can only see half of my peers' faces and their voices are muffled by cotton.

We are seated apart from each other. We aren't allowed to be too close.

It's the best year of high school, they say.

It's my senior year.

October 21st.

My birthday.

I can't see my favorite person; they are waiting for a negative COVID test result.

"That's okay. Stay safe!"

It's the best year of high school, they say.

It's my senior year.
December 31st.
I'm applying for college scholarships.
Will the dorms even be open?
Will the campus allow in-person students?
Is it even worth it?
It's the best year of high school, they say.

It's my senior year.
January 22nd.
Every day is the same.
Wake up. Attend Zooms. Do homework. Fall asleep.
Repeat.
Repeat.
Repeat.
The loneliness is beginning to devour any ambition I had left.
My drive to succeed is dwindling into nothingness.
It's the best year of high school, they say.

It's my senior year.
February 7th.
College decisions are being made.
The weather is getting warmer.
Only a few months left and then I'm done.
The finish line is intertwined between my fingertips.
I think I'm supposed to feel excited.
It's the best year of high school, they say.

It's my senior year.
February 25th
So many questions left unanswered.
Can we have prom? Check back later.
Can we graduate in person? We will see.
Can our parents spectate our senior sports seasons? It depends.
Will the final day of my high school career end with me simply
shutting my computer?
More often than not, I forget that
It's the best year of high school.
Right?

Second Place

The Fallen Soldier

by Ryan Shaw
Jackson High School

A war is coming, No say No choice,
If only there was that one voice
Dark and dreary the moment has come
On the battlefield, you hear the drum
Enemies charging with their swords drawn
And here I am just another pawn
My friends and foes falling down
Never going back to their hometown
At the Funeral surrounded by family and strangers
All because this war put them in danger
They line up and fire their arms
Into the sky filled with storms
The rain pouring down like tears from our eyes
All because of those battle cries

Third Place

An Innocent Change

by Alexa Beckwith

Hanover-Horton High School

I was a young, needy and alone child.

I remember growing up feeling as if I wasn't loved.

I heard that my step cousin has shot himself by accident and died.

I saw someone getting bullied but didn't bother to help.

I worried about what people thought about me every day.

I thought I was headed in a good direction.

But, I want to change.

I am a good person to the world at times.

I think I can change to become better for myself.

I need to get through high school to create a better life.

I try to do better for everyone supporting me.

I feel happiness now.

I forgive all people that hurt me.

Now I can change.

I will be a good person to everyone no matter how wrong they did me.

I choose to change my life for the better.

I dream to be successful, happy and an independent person.

I hope for a great lifestyle that will push me to do my best.

I predict I will have a better outcome in life than I think.

I know I will be an independent woman.

I will change.

Honorable Mention

I Am

by Kennedy Wagner
Hanover-Horton High School

I am kind and athletic.
I wonder about the future.
I hear the crowd.
I see a basketball hoop.
I want to be the best.
I am kind and athletic.

I pretend I am pro.
I feel the boat hit the waves.
I touch a basketball.
I worry about what's gonna happen next.
I cry about my old dog.
I am kind and athletic.

I understand my family loves me.
I say hard work pays off.
I dream about sports.
I try in school.
I hope I become a pro.
I am kind and athletic.



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