

MEMORIAL HALL LIBRARY'S
19TH ANNUAL
TEEN POETRY CONTEST



RECEPTION AND READING

WEDNESDAY, MAY 10 AT 7:00 PM

Contents

Middle School Winners	4
First Place: “Dancing in the Rain” by Satabhisha Sarkar, West Middle School.....	4
Second Place: “School” by Zoey Prout, Doherty Middle School	5
Third Place: “A Sign from the Universe” by Satabhisha Sarkar, West Middle School...	7
Middle School Honorable Mentions	8
“Blank Pages” by Nina Capaldi, Wood Hill Middle School.....	8
“Demon in the Mirror” by Satabhisha Sarkar, West Middle School	8
“quiet” by Elena Stamm, West Middle School	9
“Voyagers” by Justin Wang, West Middle School.....	9
“Young Blood” Nina Capaldi, Wood Hill Middle School	10
High School Winners	12
First Place: “skin (endpages)” by Jaelah Fernandez, Lynn Vocational Technical Institution	12
Second Place: “Vivimos en un mundo” by Marisol Almanzar, Greater Lawrence Technical High (Translated by jayvie song).....	12
Third Place: “BANG!” By Justin Santana, Greater Lawrence Technical School	13
High School Honorable Mentions	15
“An Evening Payment” by Valencia Melody Zhang, Phillips Academy Andover	15
“A head full of Disaster” by Destinee Dozier, Greater Lawrence Technical School	16
“Famous” by Jederlin Veloz Santana, Greater Lawrence Technical School.....	17
“Growing up with a part of me missing” by Yadira Almonte, Greater Lawrence Technical School	17
“I feel everything” by Rishika Agarwal, Andover High School	17
“I was chosen” by Zurichbel De La Cruz, Greater Lawrence Technical School.....	19
“Las paredes de mi alma” by Marisol Almanzar, Greater Lawrence Technical School (Translated by jayvie song).....	20
“Living” by Tess Moglia, Andover High School	21
“a love letter to the lady of the moon” by Rebecca Koleth, Phillips Academy Andover	21
“My Door” by Olivia Baggett, Greater Lawrence Technical School	22
“My Mind is fine gold” by Destinee Dozier, Greater Lawrence Technical School.....	22
“My rage” by Destinee Dozier, Greater Lawrence Technical School	23

“New House // Old Shame” by Lily Townsend, Andover High School 24
“Runs in the Family” by Valencia Melody Zhang, Phillips Academy Andover 25
“Tell Me About Yourself” by Rishika Agarwal, Andover High School 26
“wish it had a taste” by Seoyon Kim, Wheeler School 27

We wish to thank: Gayle Heney for serving as the judge of MHL’s Teen Poetry Contest, Fernanda Lopez and Jayvie Song for their translation services, and the Friends of the Library for sponsoring this event.

Middle School Winners

First Place: “Dancing in the Rain” by Satabhisha Sarkar, West Middle School

It was a quiet night
The trees shook in the darkness
There was a quiet rage
Lurking in the dark like a harness
Preventing every good thing from blooming

There were cries
There were fears and tears and sadness
There was bitterness
Like the taste of broken promises
Made long ago in a game, just for show

It was a terrible thing
Everyone would like to forget it now
But some remember
The aftereffects, but they forget how
Everything collapsed that night

The sky was dark
The thunder drowned out everything that mattered
Before the rain came
And the sky split while the world shattered
Drumbeats on the frozen ground
A cacophony of triumphant sound
They never saw us dancing in the rain

But I saw it, and what a sight we were
Hearts beating in rhythm, fingers interlocked
It didn't matter anymore who you were
No one saw us crying in the rain
The raindrops blended into our pain

It was a brilliant morning
They remember it as the dazzling aftermath
The age of glory
Rising from the ashes, ignoring the wrath
That decimated and rejuvenated them over and over

There were cries
There was laughter after the disaster: happiness
It was all so sweet
Like the taste of childhood promises

Returning to come true, things like “I will always love you”

It was a wonderful thing
 Everyone would like to remember it
 But some things still fade
 Things like us, so subtle you’d miss it
 First glance would fail you, but now I’ll tell you

The sun was setting
 A short, glowing shower of rain fell from the sky
 The last of the golden light danced
 No one paid attention, and you know why?
 They celebrated the big things and forgot the small
 You can always go up, but someday you’ll fall
 But not us- we twirled through it all

It was like being in the center of a kaleidoscope
 The world shifted, and so did the way we saw it
 The rain lasted for barely a few minutes
 No one noticed it, and no one remembered it
 No one saw us dancing in the rain

But I saw it, and I remembered all of it
 The good, the bad, and the shadows no one talks about
 The laughter, the pain, and the nothingness no one knows about
 The joys, the shames, and the struggles no one cares about
 And I learned from it
 And I realized how many things, how many secrets there are
 To living in this wild, ever-changing world

There is hope and there is pain
 Acceptance and disdain
 There are footsteps in a thunderstorm
 And then there’s dancing in the rain

Second Place: “School” by Zoey Prout, Doherty Middle School

School
 Stress
 Homework
 Stress
 Tests
 Stress
 Teachers
 Judging our every step

Do your homework

Ace your tests
All while waking up
At an ungodly hour

Wakeup
Go to school
Stress
Take the test
Stress
Go home
Relax?
No
do your homework
Stress
Done with your homework?
Go study for that test?
It's midnight!
Go finish your essay

And you wonder
Why we fall asleep in class
Why we can't pass our tests
Why we can't finish our homework

What's wrong with you guys
I only assign 5 pages a night

I take 8 classes

But if we ask
Did you grade my test?
You ungrateful students you have to understand
I have to grade 8 classes worth of tests
But you "can't" understand our struggles
And you ask why don't you...
Have a good social life
Have good grades
Get enough sleep
Make time for your family

I'll tell you

School
Stress
Homework
Stress

Tests
Stress

And you wonder

Third Place: “A Sign from the Universe” by Satabhisha Sarkar, West Middle School

Sometimes, the universe sends you a sign
Sometimes, you read into it too much, but you don't care
Because your long-time crush just did the exact same thing as you
And the universe is definitely telling you something

Sometimes, the sign comes from all around
People are talking about the same thing, the same opportunity
You have to try it out yourself
And when it works, when you get lucky, it's because of the universe

Sometimes, the sign is luck itself
There were so many things you wanted to do this year
And so many of them came true
The universe must be watching out for you

Sometimes, the sign is in music
One moment, you're listening to a song, letting the beats wash over you
And the next second, it clicks as if
The song was written for you to hear it in this exact moment

Sometimes, the sign is in the people surrounding you
Everyone is laughing and so are you
But for a moment, you stop and look around, and it feels perfect
As if the universe has given you a place to fit in

Sometimes, it hits you all at once
Sitting in the sunset, gazing out the window
You know that there are less fortunate people out there
That you are immensely privileged to be where you are today
But then the stars come out, and there it is- the universe
All of your dreams and realities
All of your past and your present
All in front of you, as if the universe is sending you a sign

Middle School Honorable Mentions

“Blank Pages” by Nina Capaldi, Wood Hill Middle School

If I reflected upon my life,
I would find without strife
a black pit brimming with shade
And through the dark halls I strayed,
searching vainly for any form of aid

If I were to cast a line,
then I would be sure to pine
for the pit was indeed empty
And yet the halls still tempt me
but through my life I go, with emptiness aplenty

If I ran my hands across the wall,
all I would remember is the endless fall
And through the shadows I run,
waiting for the darkness to shock and stun
But perhaps I am ready for this dusk to be done

If I waited for the light,
would all I find out is that I’m not all right?
What is to be known,
when nothing is all I’ve ever been shown
would instead I discover that forever I’ve been alone?

But I have not lived through ages,
just to have blank pages
For the world is vast and wide
and though I may have once or twice lied
my life can still be attempted and tried

“Demon in the Mirror” by Satabhisha Sarkar, West Middle School

The girl in the mirror doesn’t smile back at me
She’s a demon, with a tail and talons outstretched
Her smirk keeps me up at night and follows into my dreams
If she were to kill me now, it wouldn’t be too far-fetched

In those dreams she isn’t a mirror away, she’s with me
Pacing around my form with delight
Her laughter shakes the leaves on the trees outside
She lunges, and I cower in fright

Sometimes, she’s just the wind nudging me

Rippling against my curtains if I hide
 On the worst days, she's inside me, comforting me
 Protecting me, always at my side

If I were to touch her, she would devour me
 But everyone has to touch their demon someday
 Even just reaching for the mirror makes the temperature rocket
 She chuckles: "I just want to come out and play..."

It burns when I finally let her swallow me
 The burn of a long-deserved victory
 If that was the day all my enemies disappeared,
 Well, let's just leave it at a "mystery"

The girl in the mirror smirks back at me
 We flex our talons and flick our tails
 They'd call us witches and burn us if they saw us now
 But witches don't burn as they say in their tales

"quiet" by Elena Stamm, West Middle School

The feeling of the words "ew getaway"
 Have power over me you never understand
 The way I wanted to yell at the top of my lungs. But no I stayed quiet. Quiet you always
 told me to be quiet. When really I stayed quiet quiet enough for you not to understand
 To understand the silence you caused.
 Now it's always quiet
 Quiet glares
 Quiet stares
 Quiet
 Just quiet

"Voyagers" by Justin Wang, West Middle School

We prepare for our grand tour
 To lands unknown, to lands obscure
 The gears and engines are locked in place
 Ready to fly into deep space

In a burst of fire, in a beacon of light
 Twin swords brighten the night
 Carrying a message engraved in gold
 We craft our destiny without molds

In the depths of space,
 It's dark vacuum,
 Puts out hope's fire

Wondering if we'll be alone
 We coast until we sight
 The king's palace, majestic

In the courtyards
 We meet new friends
 Who help reignite hope
 Sharing insights for our path
 And new knowledge
 Propelling us forward, to the next lord

After the king, we visit time's lord
 Admiring his rings, crystals of wisdom
 One might not know their importance
 However, learning the ways of time
 Helps build foundations
 For spires of success

Passing by the lord of the skies
 Winds shake our tools
 And storms pound their fists
 But the fire burns steady
 And our course hold strong
 Traveling on, to the next element

The seas of knowledge
 Farthest of the worlds
 It needs years to discover
 And the oceans are full of an ore
 Hard to mine or refine
 But they hold incomparable value

The tour complete
 The quest beginning
 Having built the path
 The voyage continues
 Traveling forwards

Towards the stars

“Young Blood” Nina Capaldi, Wood Hill Middle School

A vine,
 young and yearning,
 swift and strong,
 bright and bold

Climbs the steps
crafted from years of experience
A handhold here,
an extra boost there
Life carves notches and nooks,
degrades and deforms,
weathers and weakens
all the while making way for the new
Finally,
it reaches the top,
wrapping over wilted and warped wood,
scaling splintered and shattered spines,
between the beaten and broken branches
looking up to the light.
Does not notice its vise-like grip,
strangling its helper.
Does not notice what is,
but what can be.
Noise resounds through the forest
as the great old tree releases its roots

High School Winners

First Place: “skin (endpages)” by Jaelah Fernandez, Lynn Vocational Technical Institution

my words offend you, and so does my color
do you want me to be discolored?

you see me as threat
one that should be dead
does my tan skin upset you?

you accuse me crimes
that stereotype my right
but it's fine, I get it, you're white

it's so obscure
they put you in power
yet your ego is still sour

maybe if I was like you
white and light
maybe you would treat me as if I had a right

Second Place: “Vivimos en un mundo” by Marisol Almanzar, Greater Lawrence Technical High (Translated by jayvie song)

Vivimos en un mundo en donde las apariencias son más importantes
que la inteligencia por que tener silueta de muñeca abre más puerta
que el conocimiento sincero .

Vivimos en un mundo donde las mentiras es
más relevante que lo real que si mientes bienvenido serás
a cualquier lugar pero la verdad es una crueldad que nadie se quiere enfrentar.

Vivimos en un mundo donde las personas “distintas” tienes que actuar para poder
encajar en una sociedad que solo le importa lo de afuera donde los valores no son lo letal
si no la mentira que no es real en realidad la realidad es la verdad que quieren mantener
cautivas para que no vean que lo real si lastima.

Vivimos en un mundo en el que tal vez no quieras estar por que injusticia siempre habrá
pero todos mis pensamientos se van cuando a mi lugar tranquilo vuelvo a estar en esos
brazos cálidos que me hacen olvidar de las apariencias,inteligencia y todo lo demás.

*We live in a world where appearances are more important than intelligence.
than intelligence because having a doll's silhouette opens more doors*

than sincere knowledge.

We live in a world where lies are more relevant than the truth, more relevant than the real thing; if you lie you are welcome to go anywhere but the truth is a cruelty that nobody wants to face.

We live in a world where people who are "different" have to act in order to fit into a society that only cares about the outside where the values are not what is lethal; the lie that is not true in reality the reality is the truth that they want to keep captive so that they do not see that the truth does hurt.

We live in a world in which you may not want to be in because there will always be injustice but all my thoughts go away when to my quiet place I return to be in those warm arms that make me forget about appearances, intelligence and everything else.

Third Place: "BANG!" By Justin Santana, Greater Lawrence Technical School

Darkness

I am kept in the dark all day everyday never taken out

Listening carefully to the conversations around me

Today I hear anger

Yelling

Fighting

Footsteps walking to the drawer

Finally taken into the light

Two seconds was all I was given before put into the dark once again

Thump, Thump, Thump

Heavy footsteps as we move down some stairs

I feel alive

I hear arguing and fighting once again

The voices louder and louder

Until finally I'm brought out into the light once again

A loud scream in desperation fills the room

BANG!

I see a flash of light

The light fades away as well as the voices

I am turned around and see the face of my user

BANG!

I see the flash again while i'm in motion

Falling

Crash

I am motionless once again on the floor

Time passes and I hear the faded sound of sirens

Banging on the door

Screaming once again

My existence has brought nothing but anger.
I want to be in my room again
Back to the darkness
Where everyone is happy

High School Honorable Mentions

“An Evening Payment” by Valencia Melody Zhang, Phillips Academy Andover

You shell me pistachios and drop
 them into an empty ceramic bowl. I already
 told you I don't want them.
 Your thumbs rawed from their jagged shells, your fingertips stained
 a purple pistachio hue. Your neck, strained from
 looking down at your hands,
 but they must be shelled. For your daughter.

What the fuck is wrong with you? You snap at my mother, while I watch
 a broken pistachio shell lodge itself
 between your teeth. You left
 that chopstick unwashed! I tell you to stop.
 Please. Stop what? Why are you defending
 that woman's ignorance?

You remind me of the money you have made for
 this family. In my head, I remind you of the bruises, the blow
 square in the stomach, the jagged hole
 in the bathroom door in the shape
 of shattered porcelain.

You remind me of your sacrifices I never asked you to make.
 Who was the one who got the ice for you when you were sick? I already told you
 I didn't need you to. You needed me. I pay for your meals,
 except my mother does too.

The bowl is halfway full now. You shove
 it across the table, offering the nuts
 as some deposit to me. I watch
 the bottom of the bowl scrape
 against the wood, side into ground,
 a cut through skin. The rim etched
 upon the grains, a form of scar tissue.

Let's say you shelled a bucketful, filling fourteen plastic bags.
 You think I'd love you? I push the bowl back
 across the table to you, waiting for your face
 to fall. My father, when will you learn that

even the best daughters are not banks? You cannot deposit
 pistachios into me, hoping to one day
 withdraw love.

The bowl is overflowing now. Daddy, please stop.

“A head full of Disaster” by Destinee Dozier, Greater Lawrence Technical School

A head full of disaster is what I have
 It's remarkable
 No matter how hard I try
 It's unstoppable

A head full of disaster
 One day it will be a hurricane
 A strong one with wind slapping my face
 Slapping my body and shaking my place

The next day it will be tsunami
 stealing my air
 drowning my thoughts
 And leaving disappear

A head full of disaster
 It's always there
 Others may not see it
 Or maybe they do and just don't care

Maybe they sense the thoughts in my brain
 Maybe they feel the fear in my heart
 Maybe they see the disaster in my head
 Maybe they hear the pain in my lungs

But it doesn't matter
 Because who can save me from a head full of disaster
 Nobody wants to come near a disaster
 They all stay astray

So when they see the things in my head
 They choose to go the other way
 Because I'm a head full of disaster
 But disasters are beautiful too

Destruction can turn into a city of hues
 Maybe I can be a beautiful chaos
 Or maybe I can be like the tides in the sea
 Maybe if you give me a chance, you can discover just what i can be

“Famous” by Jederlin Veloz Santana, Greater Lawrence Technical School

The problem with being a person known to many people is that no one knows you. Any little rumor that someone spreads is not going to be seen as a misinterpretation, but rather as the truth that no one has seen before, but now they do because even your gait is suspicious.

Being in the industry is like being a clown,
your sole purpose is to entertain but not to be, your personality doesn't exist or at least that's what we think.

A doll, a ghost, a little voice, you turn the crank and the doll will talk and tell you all the wonderful things you want to hear.

Truths suddenly become lies, and dreams become painful nightmares that will make you cry and scream in the middle of the night.

Trust no one,
you are alone,

if you thought you had someone after the beginning, you are very wrong because there is always a price, an expectation, nothing is enough,

Being yourself is not enough, being a good person is not enough.

The beautiful sun high in the sky, the flame that once was, is now fading away,

And then we mourn the fact that another soul is long gone.

“Growing up with a part of me missing” by Yadira Almonte, Greater Lawrence Technical School

Losing you while i was young meant growing up with part of me missing

It meant growing up without your love

It meant i never got to experience all of the love a mother would give to their kids

From what i hear i missed out on a lot

I missed out on mother to daughter talk

I missed out on that unconditional love only a mother could give a their child

I hear my friends complain about their mothers all the time

Their mothers don't let them go out

Their mother took away their phone

Their mother yelled at them for the stupidest thing

As i'm being told this all i can think about how lucky they are

I think about the fact that you're not here

Not here to tell me i can't go out

Not here to take my phone

You're not here to yell at me for the most stupidest thing

So i nod and hum

As i sit there not being able to say anything.

“I feel everything” by Rishika Agarwal, Andover High School

i feel everything

it's like i'm lying

in a bed of needles

the tips drenched in emotion
each stabbing into me
an overwhelming wave
that crashes
recedes
then washes over
again
and again

i've mastered
the smile
joy
lips upturned
amused
even with the needles
still pressing at my back

so when i'm alone
i break
shattered into a million pieces
unable to hold back
the pain
the rage
the love
the everything

isolated
it becomes too much
springs tears to my eyes
because i've spent
the whole day
holding them back

loneliness
unworthiness
sadness
mistakes
frustrations
fall like bricks
one after the other

i cry myself to sleep
hidden from everyone
forever in fear
that one day
the facade
will break too

“I was chosen” by Zurichbel De La Cruz, Greater Lawrence Technical School

Jesus, they call him, the protector of this world
While curled on my bed.

With things stuck in my head, and nothing left but tears on my face.
I try to look for his trace, but I am not able to find him.
My hand reached into the mist of my room, but I couldn't understand why I had become
so slim.
While looking at my food I could feel a lump In my throat that wouldn't let me eat.

People judged me and looked at me with grim faces, but he was the only one who
understood me.
They couldn't understand that a girl like me could ever be normal again

While looking In the mirror I stared at my body.
Whipping tears off my face.

Stepping inside of school was a nightmare.
Hearing the cackling and laughter.
The noise would only get louder.
Overwhelmingness filling my head.

Everyone around me spoke badly of me.
“You're worth less”
“Why do you exist”
“You did this to yourself”
They judged me for trying to be me.
Every night I would lay In bed, hoping nobody would hear me.
Hoping they wouldn't hear my cries.

The shortness of breath, and empty feeling in my heart.
Numbness overcame me.
Loneliness overtook, anger, sadness, and pain.

I walked into the church hoping to hear from his word.
While sitting down I felt my heart pound.
Teardrops fell down my face, and the more I wiped my tears the more I could feel him
speak to me.

The preacher walked up to me, but I was shaking and crying.
He said that my Jesus had heard my prayers, and my cries at night, and that my storm
would soon be over.
Guitars, drums, and a piano
It was a type a music I couldn't explain, and I could only feel comfort.

My face lit up like never before.
 Warmness filled heart.
 I felt so joyful, my gracious smile shined through.

He is merciful, compassionate, caring, loving, understanding, and unexplainable.
 I had fallen deeply In love with him.

I followed him, and got closer.
 Came clean with Him
 Read scripture aloud.
 Sang him love songs.
 Spoke to him.
 Breath Prayers.
 Every step I walked was with him.

I was able to find my light, warmness, comfort, and joy

**“Las paredes de mi alma” by Marisol Almanzar, Greater Lawrence
 Technical School (Translated by Jayvie song)**

Nos encontramos en cuatro paredes podemos ver las cuatros verdades
 pero a la misma vez atrocidades
 cuales seran esas cosas que placer y temor nos hacen.
 La primera pared en un paraiso pero en lo profundo un dezlice
 todos quieren ser felices pero
 hay algo que se lo impide.
 En la segunda pared cicatrices que se ven olvidadas por las matices
 tonos opacos en espocas tristes
 me refiero a tonos matices grises.
 La tercera pared libertinaje ya nada afecta a este herraje
 que pronto se desace entre celaje
 que intriga saber el cuarto celaje.
 La cuarta pared en un lienzo para que puedas empezar depara que puedas empezar de
 nuevo
 con este nuevo lienzo ningun final feliz quedara lejo
 con este final complejo los dejo
 con este final complejo los dejo.

*We find ourselves between four walls, seeing four truths, at the same time being four
 atrocities, what are those things that cause in us pleasure and fear.*

*The first wall, a paradise, but in the depths, a passing, everyone wants to be happy but
 there is something that prevents them.*

On the second wall, scars that are forgotten by the shades, dark tones in sad times, I'm referring to grey shades.

The third wall, anarchy, nothing more affects this ironwork that will soon fade between clouds that asks to know the fourth cloudscape.

The fourth wall is a canvas so that you may start anew, with this new canvas no happy ending will be too far, with this complex ending I leave you.

“Living” by Tess Moglia, Andover High School

Looking out for a time to thrive,
held back only by the words in my mind.
Copying others who are in their jive,
like an electron searching for a bind.

Something to keep and something that is mine,
a person to be, filled with love and light.
Wanting to have a curve, not just a line.
Eager for my growing to a new height.

Having the need to be memorable,
an unquenchable thirst for legacy,
for my novelty is measurable,
considering it's my identity.

My love is nothing compared to my life,
so I sit here waiting, rolling the dice.

“a love letter to the lady of the moon” by Rebecca Koleth, Phillips Academy Andover

if i could string the planets of the solar system
like beads onto a starry necklace
i would ask you to wear it
ask you to let me lift your hair off your neck and fasten the clasp of the universe

i know it would feel light to you like the brush of my eyelashes against your skin
a butterfly kiss against your cheek, your arm, your lips
you hold the blue skies right there in your eyes
and you wear the stars wrapped around your body
a lovely dress made of only the sweetest midnights

we both know that if you could
you would float up to the moon and use your favorite of galaxies to make your face
glitter

it's where you'll always belong and where you'll forever yearn for
after all, you are my lady of the moon

you stay only to make me smile and you would hate that i know that
i hate to see you wish to be among the constellations
but then again i hate even more that i hold you so tight
'cause i know that the stars miss you more than i ever could
and i know that you'll only ever be as happy as you make me
when you're finally back up there

i just want to ask you
before you leave
do the shooting stars carry wishes to you? can you make them come true?
when the tears come so easily can you just let them fall?
and do the stars you weep crystallize and carve tear tracks on your pretty face?
when will you leave me so you sleep just one night without the moon tugging on your
heart?

and can i visit you one day just to touch your face?

i hope that's not too much to ask,
lady of the moon

“My Door” by Olivia Baggett, Greater Lawrence Technical School

My door was never open
Not even a crack
My door was never open
It'd always go back
But from your force
It opened up
Now my door never opens
Not anymore
You lie and say it was a mistake
I laugh and say it wouldn't matter anyways
You cry and apologize
I sigh and give my goodbyes
You look so sad
And I wish I felt bad
But my door was never open
Not even a crack

“My Mind is fine gold” by Destinee Dozier, Greater Lawrence Technical School

My mind is like fine gold
If only you treasured it as much as I did
If only you thought as much of me as I thought of myself
You won't find my ideas everywhere

But you didn't realize that when you told me
 Nobody cares
 You took it as a joke
 You scoffed in my face
 You took that time to laugh and make a mockery
 What you didn't know
 Was the thoughts in my head
 Begging and pleading asking why I couldn't just leave things unsaid
 The digging feeling of regret
 You didn't know the thoughts I had wondering if anyone even cared
 And you don't know how hard it was to get through that day with all of those stares
 You didn't know how excited I was to tell you
 But you shut me up before your ears could even hear
 You neglected my brain and got mad at my ideas
 You refused to let me take a weight off my chest even when it was too much for me to
 even bare
 And when I had a complaint because I was being treated unfair
 Well
 You didn't care
 Why do you refuse to listen to me
 What did I do
 Maybe I could make it better
 If I at least knew
 Why does my voice matter less
 And why when I'm in a room full of people
 Am I not deserving of the same respect
 Why are you so against me
 Even when I respect you
 You're the world though so I guess I should just let you.

“My rage” by Destinee Dozier, Greater Lawrence Technical School

Take all your rage and turn it into something forever lasting they told me
 But
 What if the rage is the forever lasting?
 Well Then you turn your rage into something
 beautiful they told me
 But what's beautiful about rage?
 The amount of rage I have I could speak for days they will overflow on a page and still
 some how find a way to make space in my Brain
 The amount of rage I have will turn into hate and allow every other emotion to dissipate
 Nothing is beautiful about my rage, and I can't even find the words to explain it
 The emotions I feel are much more than Heinous
 The amount of rage I feel is so strong it makes me want to cut the stem off of the flower I
 tried to grow into for so long
 Nothing good comes from rage
 It's just a devious game that forever replays
 It's like watching a movie with no good plot

The rage I feel leaves me distraught
 You tell me to turn it into something beautiful
 But that rage is me, I am my rage
 So how do I make myself beautiful
 How do I make people understand the words on my page
 How do I make people want to dance to the melody of my pain
 How do I make people listen to my voice of disarray
 My rage is not beautiful it's not something you find in between the horizon
 My rage is not going to wake you up on a early morning and tell you good rising
 And my rage is not rare it's not a lunar eclipse or on blood moon timing
 My rage is everyday and it starts way to soon
 my rage will come behind me and extinguish my candle
 my rage is so strong i wish there was a turn off handle
 but with all that my rage is still apart of my voice so I guess I should learn to use it
 all that to say, learning how to use my voice is so god damn confusing.

“New House // Old Shame” by Lily Townsend, Andover High School

If I had a stone for every regret,
 I could build myself a new house.

A new house to hide away,
 To forget my shame.

To forget my shame,
 I'd never regret.

I'd never regret,
 Living in my new home.

My new home,
 Free of shame.

Free of shame,
 But regret follows me.

But regret follows me,
 Free of shame.

Free of shame,
 My new home.

Living in my new home,
 I'd never regret.

I'd never regret,
To forget my shame.

To forget my shame,
A new house to hide away.

I could build myself a new house,

If I had a stone for every regret.

**“Runs in the Family” by Valencia Melody Zhang, Phillips Academy Andover
after Cathy Linh Che**

She looked up from the bed and a cat
burst from her eyes, clawing her face puffy. Then, a lizard
slithered out of her lips, his hands gripping tightly on the
wrinkles crowning her cheeks. I walked over to her and
him, and she let go of his cold, dead hand.
Just like that.
No more dad, my mother says. He's gone.

The blankets smothered her. The fuzzy one, his old
wool one from China, mine that I knit years ago. She
slept and slept and slept, snore snore snore, rotate
and readjust, snore snore snore.
I stared at her from above, birds-eye view,
watching the lizard wither
to death on her cheek and
the cat deepen the gashes. I poked
her every so often, waiting for a nudge
back. I held her hand,
shaking it to wake her up.
I needed food.
I needed to be fed. She'd

peel her eyes open, see me, and close them shut, sealing
the creases together.
Ah, just like that. No more mom, I say.

I begin cooking and cleaning. The toilet bleach, ammonia, extra virgin
olive oil. The gurgling of the garbage disposal, wooshes of the laundry
machine, stench of sizzling garlic frying in the wok.

Snore snore snore. And I let go of her hand.

“Tell Me About Yourself” by Rishika Agarwal, Andover High School

Tell me about yourself
they ask
They don't really want to know
about you
They'd ask your mom if that was the case
They want to know how you perceive yourself
What is important to you
What assumptions shall they make
Should they question
the words you typed on your application page?
Are your parents divorced?
Why are you telling them that?
Is that who you are?

When they ask Me
I will tell them about my innocence
Shattered
as I realized the ugliness of a world
that needs change
leaving me with the desire to help others
I will tell them about
my family
my Support System
About how they told me I could do anything
I will also recite my perfectly crafted college essay
And they will smile
Thinking
This girl is smart
Caring
They'll look at my face and think it's nice- pretty
They'll think they learned so much about me
That they could give an answer
When their supervisor asks,
"tell me about her"

And -
Even though
everything I say is true,
I will be silent,
while they contemplate me
Thinking about all the things I haven't revealed
Thinking about how
I've never told anyone about myself

“wish it had a taste” by Seoyon Kim, Wheeler School

When God wanted an off-white colonial in the suburbs
He got an off-white colonial in the suburbs
When God wanted a sealed cedar deck with a matching
patio furniture set
He got the sealed cedar deck
and the matching patio furniture set
and a fire pit, to boot
No kidding
But I guess it's not all that different
'Cuz you know if my girl wants it
well
My girl will have it
If my girl wants to tear the house up then my
girl will have it and if
My girl wants to burn it all down she'll have that, too
Raggedy teeth
Ash on my tongue and it tastes like nothing. Mouth all
dried up I can't even spit. We wheeze on the couch.
It's what God would have wanted