MEMORIAL HALL
LIBRARY'S 2021
TEEN POETRY CONTEST
Memorial Hall Library’s 2021 Teen Poetry Contest

Table of Contents

Middle School Winners
   First Place: “Blocks of Time” by Bryan Bu 1
   Second Place: “Hope” by Ishaan Padmawar 2
   Third Place: “Drowning in Thin Water” by Addison Feltz 3

Middle School Honorable Mentions
   “One Day” by Lyric Bartleson 4
   “My Future” by Anna DeLeo 5
   “The Strangers” by Anna DeLeo 6
   “The Impossible” by Addison Feltz 8
   “Hello, From Space” by Henry He 9
   “COLORS” by Samiha Jaffar 10
   “The wait is over” by Samiha Jaffar 11
   “Ocean at Night!” by Niranjan Nair 12
   “George Floyd” by Simone Pillidge 13
   “Save the Ocean” by Keira Schaefer 14

High School Winners
   First Place: “a letter to the goat in my backyard” by Michela Rowland 15
   Second Place: “spiderwebs and snowflakes” by Michela Rowland 17
   Third Place: “Not What I had Expected” by Maureen Wright 19

High School Honorable Mentions
   “Rapunzel” by Elizabeth Anderson 20
   “A Gentle Reminder of All You Can Do” by Anat Briskin 21
   “Scrapbook Love: a Smattering of Whispered Guesses and Analogies” by Anat Briskin 22
   “elegy of artemis” by Claire Cahill 23
   “music” by Claire Cahill 24
High School Honorable Mentions (cont’d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“a neutron star”</td>
<td>by Claire Cahill</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The School System is Broken”</td>
<td>by Mimi Cung</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Motivation Behind the Authentic Pain”</td>
<td>by Isaac Diaz</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“love in the dark”</td>
<td>by M.D.</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“waves”</td>
<td>by M.D.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Drifting Monster of Present Day”</td>
<td>by Nya Leonardo</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Ode to WWE”</td>
<td>by Florence Mwangi</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Beautiful Girl The Melancholy Princess”</td>
<td>by Celia Schwartz</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Pigeon”</td>
<td>by Madeline Shin</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“In the night”</td>
<td>by Fiona Veletzos</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Darkroom”</td>
<td>by James Wong</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Junior Year”</td>
<td>by Alexandra Zetea</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Middle School Winners

*First Place: “Blocks of Time” by Bryan Bu, West Middle School*

Every day,
Every hour,
Every minute,
Every second,
We build our buildings.

Not real buildings, of course.
but these buildings are more precious
than the most beautiful mansion,
or tallest skyscraper.

These buildings are made with
the blocks of time.

Some will go right for building towers.
To become the tippity top
at what they do best.
It could fall-
I’m warning you!
But then again,
it might not.

Others will play it safe.
Work hard at many things
and build a strong foundation.

It might not look like much, compared to a tower,

but it’s got loads of potential.

Wait...
How come she’s got more blocks than him?
I suppose he’s lost some time.
Through bickering,
daydreaming,
and procrastinating.

So consider carefully.
Do you like towers or foundations?
How many blocks do you have?
Place your blocks of time wisely.
Second Place: “Hope” by Ishaan Padmawar, The Pike School

The leaves, they sway, they flap in the cold wind
The stems, they wave, they twist in the cold wind
The roots stay still, not harmed by the wind, but by a frost
The cold is coming, but the plant stays strong

And the bud, it opens
Gingerly, as not to fall apart
But eagerly, as to quickly release its scent into the ever chilling air
To show its colors to the world

Blooming even through the cold
And through the freeze
Where other plants gave up
This one persisted

It withered
It grew
It hoped
Third Place: “Drowning in Thin Water” by Addison Feltz, West Middle School

There used to be a little girl,
who danced in the rain,
ever watched what she ate,
she got lost in the books that crossed her eyes,
but that little girl is gone now.
Where did she go?
Well, she is falling,
down, down, down,
into deep thoughts that the little girl wouldn't have recognized.
The rain that dripped on her face formed into tears,
700 calories is something she can't bear,
those books burned,
and what was left was a woman,
who has destroyed herself to please you.
Middle School Honorable Mentions

“One Day” by Lyric Bartleson, Wood Hill Middle School

Walking behind the school
Saw the shadows that we cast
Wanting to be with you
But-
Too afraid to ask

My pinkie flitted out
Almost finding its way
But I stopped myself and thought-
What would he say?

I asked for help that one time
You were too close to me to think
Why oh why did I ask you
To come over to my seat?

My heart was beating faster
Barely stuttered the words
Guess the books are right
Must’ve looked crazy to the world

But it’s not all fuzzy butterflies
You’re not the perfect guy
I don’t know why I like you
Don’t know why I try

You’ve said some things that made me shatter
You made me mad-
That made me sadder

You walked away like nothings wrong
Like you didn’t stab me in the heart
My insides crumble as I bend down
To gather my broken parts

And now I’m trying to fix myself
Teach myself to see
With all the facts laid out I know
You’re no good for me

I’m learning to walk away
Don’t look for you, avert my gaze
I know some day i’ll be over you
But-

That day is not today.
“My Future” by Anna DeLeo, West Middle School

“There” i say
pointing to the
future
i know what i’m hoping for
i’m hoping for family
and friends
and happiness
and light
but i
don’t see any of
that
in fact,
i don’t see

anything.
“The Strangers” by Anna DeLeo, West Middle School

this world is full of
Truth
but it will not be shown to you by the
rich
the powerful
the mighty
no it will be shown by the
outcasts
and loners
the rebellious and the
meek

in the eyes of a
survivor you will see
true hope and
endurance

on the wrists of a
broken teen you will learn
suffering and
pain

on the lips of a
drunken stranger you will taste
longing and rebellion and
regret

in the screams of a
lonely child you will hear agony
and hopelessness in its
purest form

in the mind of an abuser you will
discover what it means
to be
cruel

in the laugh of a
child you will see what joy and innocence and
freedom really mean
in the arms of a
lost lover you
will feel what comfort and safety
and warmth truly are

and one day when my time here is done
we will recognize each other on
the street
not as friends but
as
strangers and i
will slip this poem in your pocket
and
you will learn what it means to feel
you will learn not from the
great
or the important
not the wealthy
and affluent
No
you will learn from
the forgotten
the melancholy
the lost
the broken
you will learn from all of us,
the strangers.
“The Impossible” by Addison Feltz, West Middle School

It is difficult to be a girl
when someone is expecting you to be made of sugar and spice.
You must have nice curves,
but not any fat.
Down to the bone,
let your arms stay thin.
And to anyone who passes by,
no matter how you feel,
remember to give a grin.

I want to be the girl who makes you stop and stare,
by how she smiles and talks, and by the clothes she wears.
I want to have a little nose,
and I want to have bigger lips.
I want to have straight teeth, and I want to have wider hips.
Nobody knows.

Somewhere out there, not too far away,
a little girl is dreaming of being a princess one day.
She’ll grow up as we all do,
and she’ll wish that she never knew.

She wishes she didn’t know that pain is beauty.
She wishes she didn’t know that she must acquire such things.
She wishes she was a bird and could sprout wings.
She wants to fly far away.
She wants to land on the moon someday.

But if a bird travels too far in the sky,
they will come,
down, down, down
and they will die.
This is how us girls live
when you comment on our weight, on our clothes, on our meal.
Something that you may not know is that
girls have feelings too.
“Hello, From Space” by Henry He, The Pike School

Over the vast oceans and jubilant lights,
Through the mess of puffy clouds,
In the pink glow of the caressing sun,
During the thrilling ride that’s speeding fast,
    A rocket soars.

Among the shining stars, a rainbow of color,
Amidst the soothing ocean of black,
Beneath asteroids blasting past with a trail of dust,
Around the array of insurmountable planets,
    A spaceship floats.

On the vast moon, sprinkled with divots,
Among floating moon rocks,
By an array of flags, a beautiful unity,
Besides a sleek behemoth of a ship,
    An astronaut bounds.

Upon the big, blue earth,
In a cozy house that’s not quite full,
By a stove and a bed, both untouched for months,
Near a waiting dog, lonely without its best friend,
    Two children wait.

In a plain bedroom, not so used,
In a high tech spaceship, not so lively,
From high in space and low on ground,
Through a glass picture frame,
    A family is united once more.
“COLORS” by Samiha Jaffar, The Islamic Academy for Peace

We have never really noticed the colors around us
   The green trees in spring
   The red leaves in fall
The shiny white snow in winter
   The blue water in summer
   Now we notice everything
We are stuck in our homes
We take a peek outside
   And see a rainbow
   So many colors...
   Stuck inside, we feel like

All we see is black and white!
"The wait is over" by Samiha Jaffar, The Islamic Academy for Peace

Spring of 2020 we longed
All of us with glee to welcome spring
And to flee to have fun on the swing
Corona tagged along
All of us with woe to go on lockdown
And to know the world is shutdown

All of us thinking it is for two weeks
it’s been over a year

We walked to school
now we sit before devices
We walked in school wanting to leave
now we can not go back
We walked out of school to go to activities
now we stay at home cause everything is cancelled
We went outside seeing our friends
now we are in our home not able to leave
We made new friends
now we are alone

We are downhearted
We are dejected
We are bereaved

But we need to be brave
Fight the virus
And be bold in front of the awfulness
We are almost there
The vaccine is here
Let’s roll up our sleeves

The wait is over..!
“Ocean at Night!” by Niranjan Nair, West Middle School

The stars shone like millions of rays of light on to the cold dark night sky
The moonlight reflected in the sea like fire in the water
Fish leaped out of the water into the air
Creating splashes of light as they hit the ocean surface
The reflection of the stars on their cold scales
Glistening their dark figures
As they flew into the sea
The water was calm and steady
The wind blew mist across the seashore
The man watched
As the seabirds chirped their lullabies
And the fish danced on the sea
And he thought
The ocean at night
Is something special.
I’m not black, I am white, but I still know what’s right. You put your knee on his neck and you don’t regret seeing his last tiny breath. For you saw is death. The words “I can’t breathe” weren’t enough. Though you may bluff You had done it, and I will stand and say that it is enough. If he was white, you would not dare take his life. I will fight for what’s right for a black person’s rights, I will fight for what’s right for a black person’s life.
“Save the Ocean” by Keira Schaefer, Mountain View Middle School

Bright colorful coral reefs
Schools of fish wind through the water
Turtles sharks eels
Splash
Plastic falls into the sea
Remnants of trash dive into the ocean
Coral fades away
Turtles, sharks, and eels abandon the reef
Fish surface to the top
The once beautiful sea is deserted
Flying plastic bags, murky water and death
This is one of many seas that are polluted
We must
Share it
Protect it
Respect it
And all animals and humans can live in peace
High School Winners

First Place: “a letter to the goat in my backyard” by Michela Rowland, Phillips Academy Andover

i’ve heard that goats can eat anything.
i was wondering if you’d humor me,
if i decided to cook you a meal.
nothing too fancy, just a couple of courses
and maybe some extra...
shall we say, eccentric?
ingredients.

see, if goats can eat anything,
i was wondering if i could toss together
a salad of the invasive bittersweet that’s
stealing the breath of my maple tree
(that almost sounds romantic, but they’re
not in love, it’s kind of a toxic relationship.)

i’ll put shredded scraps of documents that
hold my bank account info on top, for some
 crunch, and maybe i’ll even add a crushed
poison-ivy and coronavirus dressing -
i’ve heard it’s all the rage these days.

for your dining pleasure, the second course
will be hatred soup, mixed with all of the
-ists and -isms and a bit of injustice,
for kicks. (i hope you like spice; ‘a bit’
may have been an understatement.)

a slice of pollution bread for dipping,
rolled in honeyed oats and
motorcycle exhaust, and some
global warming noodles sprinkled
with sea salt and tangy acid rain.

the third dish will be from the lovely garden
of the obnoxious neighbor next door,
who starts blasting christmas music in
october and doesn’t let up until march -

i’ll make you a sandwich with morning
glories and tomatoes and three kinds
of basil, topped with daffodils and
peonies and all the perennials that
take forever to grow.

i was thinking the fourth course could be
hazardous waste, and the fifth could be
homophobia, and the sixth, those
horribly scented markers that falsely claim to be washable.

i’m not the finest cook, but i promise to try my best, as long as you promise to rid my kitchen of everything i make. do we have a deal?

(p.s. let me know if you have any allergies - i’d hate to have leftovers.)
Second Place: “spiderwebs and snowflakes” by Michela Rowland, Phillips Academy Andover

november

- it's
  11:11

you
  murmur,
  feather light
  fingers
unraveling
  my
  braids
empty wineglasses,
  strewn
  on the
  mantle,
glistening
pale blue
  in the
  moonlight.

- careful,
you whisper,
- it's bad
  luck to see
  the minute
  change.

my eyes
flit closed,
goosebumps
dancing
  across
  bare skin
as frost
finds
  its
  way
through
  the rifts
in the
windowpane.

i wish
  for you

january
it's
11:11.
if you
were here,
you'd
nudge me,
and tell me
to make
a wish,
send me a
small smile,
lashes brushing
cheek
as eyelids
flutter
closed and-

the clock
flickers to
11:12.
Third Place: “Not What I Had Expected” by Maureen Wright, Greater Lawrence Technical School

Who would’ve thought that halfway through the year we’d still be playing “get to know you” games and trying to get glimpses of what everyone looks like?

I certainly did not.

It’s my freshman year,
I imagined crowded halls
**booming** voices
the never-ending laughter...

Silence.
Silence is what our reality is
Awkwardness is what our reality is
“6 FEET AT ALL TIMES” is what our reality is
Those words have been ringing in my ears more than the school bell has gotten the opportunity to

This school is still one huge labyrinth to me
It twists and turns and it loops and all of a sudden you’re back to where you started
I’m a little duckling waddling around in these halls just following Mother Duck and letting her lead the way because I know the second I stray away,
the walls would consume me

I hadn’t imagined what the school would smell like before
but since entering all I know are the scents of cleaning supplies and my own toothpaste
Would the cafeteria be filled with the scent of that day’s lunch?
Would the halls smell like guys cologne or girls perfume?
Or
Would it reek of B.O.?
You know what? Maybe it’s for the best that we have masks

We are hopeful and we are trying to get things back to normal
but...
I miss hugging people
I miss getting to talk face to face during lunch
I miss laughing
I miss getting to spill tea with my friends
I miss it.
And I’m missing something I don’t even know

This isn’t what I had expected.
High School Honorable Mentions

“Rapunzel” by Elizabeth Anderson, Andover High School

Counting down the seconds
Two people, six, eight--
Join, mute, arrange
Her face. No smiling, just stare
Into a void.

No masks
But lots of tasks
Block 1 block 2 block 3 block 4
Done.
Now homework by the ton.

A question met
With only silence
Faces set
In self conscious stone.

The breakout room
Of quiet collaboration.
Camera? No camera?
The question of doom.

Do you even know her name?
It's through a screen but
her face is the same.

Aching wrists and
strained eyes and
Crazy quarantine hair.

Virtually anonymous
College tours asynchronous.

Remotely distant
Connections nonexistent.

Rapunzel in her tower.
“A Gentle Reminder of All You Can Do” by Anat Briskin, Andover High School

I see your silhouette in the corner
The burning handprints they’ve left on you
When they try to shut you down
Beaten down by the lies you’re fed
Until you started to believe them
You think that when they say you’re not enough
You need to be more
And when they say you’re too much
You think you need to fold yourself down to fit a mold that’s always shrinking
You don’t know yet
That when you speak your mind
The heavens tremble
When you stand your ground in-spite of your fear
The earth spins twice as fast
When you look around an empty stage and still say your truth
Humanity falls silent in awe
When they tell you you’re not worth it
And you look them in the eyes and say you are
Angels and gods fall to their knees
Your voice shatters mirrors of doubt
Your mind is a hurricane ripping through barriers
Your breath brings life
And your wrath destroys it
In your hands you hold the power
To mold galaxies and shape realities
With a flick of your wrist
Constellations dance across night skies
Your calloused fingertips
Hollow out valleys and flood oceans
Your spirit seeps into the ground
You are what built Rome over night
And you are what brought it down just as quick
So for the love of Mother Earth and all she bears
Don’t let anyone take that from you
I've never been in love, but I've always wanted to write a love poem
I guess I'm a bit obsessed over the thought that you could feel something so fully that you couldn't help but write it down
I heard that love was like an earthquake
It would knock you over where you stood
That love would shake you to your core
I heard that love was like tectonic plates when they touched
That their meeting was love
That it would spin you round and round and when you regained your balance
Everything had shifted
Three inches to the left
And you didn't really want to move it back
I heard that love was like a raging fire
If that fire was made of gasoline
And burned bright enough to blind you
That love would take everything you thought you knew and burn it to nothing
That love would laugh from the ashes
And watch you dissolve
That love would take and take and take
It would wrap you in its fiery embrace
And leave before you ever truly felt its warmth
I heard that love was like butterfly kisses
And sleeping on a cloud
That love was delicate and fragile
That it was pure
But would crack at your fingertips
If you didn't grip it tight enough
I heard that love was like lying on a warm rock
With a todo list full of checks
And you could only hear the wind
And the beating of your heart
I heard the love took more effort than climbing a mountain that never stopped growing
It would take your breath away
And your heart would ache
And your lungs would be sore
But then you would look out and see the view
Even if you looked up at the hill and saw you weren't even halfway done
You would know that your ledge was just fine
And for the next few minutes
Each breath would feel like your first
Because you remembered why you were there in the first place
I even heard that being in love
Was like holding a glass ball
On a tiny lifeboat
In a huge storm
And hoping it didn't break
I'm not sure I know what that means
Because I've never been in love
But I like listening to people tell me what love is
And I like writing poetry
“elegy of artemis” by Claire Cahill, Phillips Academy Andover

orion’s bow
forever points at the sky
frozen in infinite boast and impossible
promise, for when one beast
is slain another arises:
the beheaded hydra’s neck
springs forth twice yesterday’s
evil but no one
looks at the stars
anymore.
yesterday’s lesson
today’s ignorance
tomorrow’s mistake
past, present, future
forgone before it begins
as medusa lifts her head and
turns the world to stone
before the stars know any difference,
history starts today
and tomorrow and
the day after that but
never yesterday.
we are a species frozen in time
seized by lethargy masked
as stone-cold determination and
colorful lies turned black and white:
an ignorant cesspool
that drips deeper
than we are tall conceals
the kraken’s tentacles in the
darkness of arbitrary division.

now all we have is moonlight
on the nights that we’re lucky.
“music” by Claire Cahill, Phillips Academy Andover

depth in my body let the music flow
rattle and thrum
bone against bone
let it eat away at memory
drink with black hole eyes
until everything is new and
I am naive
and commanding and
loud and
rude and not just a presence
in other people's stories but
a protagonist
or a villain
I'm okay with that too
I just want to be
something
something other than the death
threats and the knives of
reality beating down on
hopeful tomorrow
just for a moment let me be the
beat the drum
the rumbling base that you
feel more than hear let me
be let me be let me
be.
“a neutron star” by Claire Cahill, Phillips Academy Andover

tongue tied twisted
stuck silent stardust: gold
iron sulfur
reduced to squares on a
table,
crumbs of yellow and a
rotten smell,
protostar to protoplasm
and none of it matters
to you.

I’m just another statistic.
you look at my footsteps
trailing beyond x and y
and think “she’s
just another one, someone
that didn’t open her eyes”

degenerate deplorable
incompetent insufficient:
pretty till I’m not
smart till I’m not
till I drop
collapse
like the core of a dying star
exhausted.

eloquent anger
stymied thoughtcrime
avoidance
blame
guilt
gravity.

condensed
collapsed
restricted
pressed

dimmed
not
dead

just
waiting.
“The School System is Broken” by Mimi Cung

First period, history.
1920s. A time of revolution.
Where women were fighting in protest
Where blacks were being addressed yet suppressed
A century later.
2020s. The same old story.
Where women are fighting in protest
Where blacks are being addressed yet suppressed

Second period, physics.
Newton said for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction
But then the variables that matter are only part of a fraction
Gravity does not account for every attraction
There is no “equal” in legal action

Third period, chemistry.
The atoms that make everything up
The poison that fills up the cup
It may be a microscope that helps us see
But it is not enough to make us agree

Fourth period, calculus.
Reflect along the x-axis, shift to the left $\frac{2}{3}$, move up 4
How about we graph the number of assaults that were just next door.
How about we graph the lives that have not been accounted for.
How about we graph the murders that increase more and more.

Fifth period, study hall.
The time to have total freedom
Except stay in the classroom, don’t wander the halls, keep silent,
Keep silent and don’t mind all the violence
Because everyone has all their rights until everyone needs them.

Sixth period, english.
Write about your opinions but do not make it bias
Make sure to keep quiet before you become a virus
The grammar matters more than the message
When ultimately we all become a percentage

Seventh period, gym.
We throw balls while they throw bombs
Flying across the gym like bullets
The adrenaline flows from your head to your toes
There is no room for you to oppose

I never learned that life is not what you plan it to be,
Not until it steered off course.
I never learned how to defend myself,
Not until it was my only option.
I never learned the evils of the world,
Not until all the good was gone.
I never learned how to do my taxes,
And honestly, I still don’t.
“The Motivation Behind the Authentic Pain” by Isaac Diaz, Greater Lawrence Technical School

So many questions yet all the answers feel out of my reach. So many calls and so many unanswered rings. I tried to call you titi but I guess heaven is treating you real good up there. I'm glad. I really am. I rather have you up there then with six tubes in your body and you only living through a machine. Hearing the beeps like the last one could be any moment. Hearing the beeps in slow motion as reality hits louder than the voices in my head. As I wear this rose gold chain around my neck with honor and pain with your name gleaming with hope I reminisce about our times. I remember when you pushed me into poetry. Always wanted me to be around you and those little moments where we laughed with only us around as others faded into the background. And also those memories where I saw you in pain And I wanted to take all of it from you. From the cancer that was devouring you and destroying your chances too live, to your family being your last supports to me wanting to do something and not doing it. If only life hit me harder at that time maybe I would have been shaken up and done something. Spoken up or maybe save you a year to live. Instead of making it three years of you gone it would have been two. Sometimes I question if I even made a difference. You might think I'm so okay with you being gone but every step I take it's for you. My biggest inspiration is your absence in my life as I have you in my heart and not holding your fragile hands that always smelled like coconut. I remember noticing the different wings. From short to long, black to brown to a sunset gold. I remember the cookouts you threw to hide the deadly reality, that you didn't have much time left. That you were racing against the clock trying to do everything you wanted to do before the beeps went flat. Going on cruises and having the last of your laughs. Trying to make it a bit longer to see your own son's make something of themselves instead of being in their rooms playing 2k. But I guess it had to be your absence for those to realize how amazing you are. For me, it made me realize how I never told you enough. How I always smiled because of you. Of how you were the first person to guide me through my first heartbreak that devastated me into pieces. Getting my first gut punch from love. How you would always tell me "you're a handsome boy papi keep your head up." With your hands on my cheek, the feeling of them softer than the feathers and the white dress you had that day. Your words, more comforting than blankets or dreams can comfort. I idolized you and still do till this day titi. I wear this chain with pride, love, hope, faith, and pain. I'm happy that you're in a happy place but please don't leave me forever. I will always have you in my heart. Trust me, there is space for you. You're the one that made it strong everyday so you should know. I won't ever forget that moment. When you died right in my hands. Squeezing your hand and watching the last breathes flutter out your body and the machine making an eerie "beep!" I love you titi. Keep being the amazing person you are in heaven as you were here on earth. I wear this chain with pride and hope for the both of us. And I promise, I will take the steps forward no matter the pain. Doesn't matter. Three long years and gone too soon. Rest easy queen.
“love in the dark” by M.D., Greater Lawrence Technical School

she took her by the hand and taught her what it felt like to love another person entirely. the sun was completely and utterly theirs. the moon was envious of their passionate love. the moon belonged to those who shed tears in the midst of the night because of their loneliness. it belonged to the chosen ones who’d rather be a lover underneath the night sky instead of underneath the vibrant rays of the sun. they belonged to the light and we, my love, we belong to the dark.
“waves” by M.D., Greater Lawrence Technical School

i never got the ocean. how it was calm and dewy in the morning, but during the night the storms were rough, making waves crash violently. but now i understand. because i’ve been loved by you.
A social dilemma
Rises upon a planet
Soaking up young minds
Refusing to back down

A social dilemma
Conquers the world
In need of more power
Expanding nonsense

A social dilemma
A platform of disappointment
Craving attention
Relationships collapse

A social dilemma
Hypnotizes young ones
Oblivious young ones
Only if they knew

A social dilemma
A darkness
Settling for less
Covering young potential

A social dilemma
Strikes and traps
Damaging minds
Continuing to take control

A social dilemma
Rips apart unity
Loving that departure
It continues to grow

A social dilemma
A conflict with no solution
Awaiting a challenge
Who will step up
“Ode to WWE” by Florence Mwangi, Greater Lawrence Technical School

Ding ding, the match starts
Wrestlers using different moves to fight
New moves: the spear, jumping high knee, signature finisher
The bod they show smiling to the crowd
A place where it smells like victory
A place where it is exciting like parents having their first baby
A place where it tastes like sweat
Showing off while hearing the happy yells of the crowd
The stadium always full of people like a city
WWE, a dead place without people to cheer
A heavenly place
Noisier than thunder roars
Pero out of all wrestlers
I am inspired by three
Who are they, you ask?
They are monsters among men
They can smell your fears or pain
They are aggressive than a pack of wolves
They are the kings of the arena
People die of happiness when they see them
Teammates, brothers and inspiring dads Their team name “The Shield”
The mates: Seth Rollins, Roman Reigns and Dean Ambrose
I don’t know them but I believe in them
Mi Papa introduced WWE when I was a baby
Yet he says mi hija it just entrenamiento
Pero Para mi, it has taught me a lot
It taught me “you never give up on somethings you love”
Quotes by Seth Rollins and many WWE stars
It taught me impossible is another word of possible
Gracias WWE and to you the Shield
Sus legados vivirán para siempre en mi corazón
I cannot even see myself, anymore, and my therapist says that I should look instead at the glass half full, the things in which I can control--- the beauties and the sun, to see my people, near and dear, but what can you do? Who can I talk to? How can I tell her a thing, why, we have only just met do you know what it took for me to cry in front of my mother? To say fuck you to the boy who never loved me when I drive past his house, to tell my brother I am sad, and I will always be sad, the ache gets bigger until it is numb, and then I am just alone, aching, sobbing—I learned how to cry as a rabbit speaks, as wind moves through air and is quiet like that, breathless like that; the lulls and swoons of my own emotion, finding the strange things to say that don’t make sense, doing the things I can do, staying chin tucked, head down running and screaming at the top of my lungs-- watch me spiral and turn into the moon, watch the moon crash and burn, watch me loose my mind over boys who see me and see nothing at all, see the shadows and call them substance, the bodies and
call them fuckable,

living off hormones
and three hours of
sleep, you are the one who is

confused and unstable and
unsure of everything you know to
be true. And

I am too. Find the comfort in the
solidarity I give and give but
cannot find myself, those people that

see you cry and know what you
are going through-- watch
me sing to

petty melodrama, the tune shifting as I take one
breath and then another,
call me by my name, Beautiful Girl The Melancholy Princess,

Fighting Resilience, I
brush my teeth and go to sleep, wake up, again, again, it
is not a dream we ever wanted, it will never be a dream we wanted, it is only

life, and when you and me is just
me, I don’t know what else to
do. So I

take a breath
and brush my teeth.
I fall asleep

and hope
my next therapy session
will end before the hour is through.
“The Pigeon” by Madeline Shin, Andover High School

A large courtyard looms just ahead in the labyrinth of the city
Quite a magnificence to behold for the visitor’s eye!
Bustling with all sorts of people walking across its ancient cobbled floor,
They crowd around a majestic ivory marbled fountain in the center.
The roaring sound of the ever flowing water inspires quiet
Even the most voluble tourist cannot resist the urge.

In that quiet, a few sharp eyed observers may be able to see it:
A lonely pigeon perched on the top of the lofty fountain.
With a black plume covered by flecks of differents shades of gray
Along with an iridescent neck that shines brightly against the glare of the sun
And brilliant fire orange eyes,
The pigeon is a mainstay on the fountain.

Seemingly without companions, it spends its days watching the courtyard,
With an unblinking and critical eye.
Repeatedly, it scans its surroundings
There’s the same old man sleeping on the stairs,
His hardened face softened by gentle dreams.
The three little children who always run across the courtyard,
Their bright scarfs streaking colors in the air.
And who could forget the never ending sounds of footsteps?

On rare occasions, the pigeon will leave its watchpost.
Its wings flutter without a rhythm
As if it is not used to using them.
Yet, it soars to impressive heights into the gentle morning sky
A speck of black against a blue canvas.
It gracefully dives and ascends in this ocean
No sense of direction and no clear purpose
Perhaps it is searching for nourishment
Perhaps it is searching for companions
Perhaps it is searching for an escape.

When its clawed feet finally perch themselves onto the fountain,
The anchor that traps it to the ground,
It once again surveys the courtyard.
There’s the same old man sleeping on the stairs,
His hardened face only made harsher through nightmares.
The three little children who always run across the courtyard,
Their bright scarfs now dirtied through hours of play.
And who could forget the never ending sounds of footsteps?
All this time, no matter where it flew
Always inevitably ending up back at the courtyard
Stuck in an open prison
Nothing has changed.
“In the night” by Fiona Veletzos, Andover High School

There are no colors
in the night
Just shades of gray
all black and white

And while your soft snores
fill the air
Night creatures emerge
everywhere

Tall and short
big and small
walk and fly
slither and crawl

Gather with me
'neath the new moon tonight
Let’s have some fun
give the humans a fright.

Come let’s go
wake the sleeping undead
watch as they rise
from their coffin like bed

Swift in the shadows,
darker than night,
we travel on towards
the city of light

where you sleep,
safe in your bed,
visions of happiness
drifting through your head.

Well not for long,
we'll give you a fright
skulking through the darkness
us creatures of night.

Climb through your window
from underneath you bed
lean over your body
we need to be fed

A claw pokes your leg
you jolt awake
but we've disappeared leaving fear in our wake.

We have no colors creatures in the night just shades of gray all black and white.
“The Darkroom” by James Wong, Andover High School

The process is simple
First you expose the photo paper with the enlarger
Next you agitate the chemicals onto the image
Finally, you rinse the photo through gentle flowing water
In the end, you hang the picture up to dry

My favorite print has always been a photograph of a shriveled up gardenia I found at the park
I watched its delicate petals appear as it drifted through the crashing waves of the developer
After the violent sea calmed, the decaying flower came back to life
Only then did it return to the light

The process is simple

Life begins with a ray of light gleaming upon the angelic smile of a newborn’s tiny face
Who of which grows to be the child playing with his friends in the radiating sun

Only, the light shuts off the moment it’s needed most
It gradually dims until all that’s left is a flicker
The purity of life’s innocence becomes engulfed by the shadows
Shadows made to entrap all morality in the pitch-black of night

In the darkness, life will become agitated by the toxic chemicals of a finite environment
The sour vinegar-like scent wafting up the stairs of a merciless hierarchy
The acidic burn of unresolved justice tearing away any remaining fragments of virtue
Sitting in a pool of bigotry tinted by the crimson hues of the safelight

Eventually, life can be brought back from the poison
Cleansed by the tranquility in a bowl of clarity
Once fully dried off, only then has life escaped
Becoming a divine image of unimaginable possibilities
Shimmering brighter than the world has ever seen

The process is simple
“Junior Year” by Alexandra Zetea, Andover High School

Junior year was stressful back in normalcy
But in COVID it’s heightened an insane degree
Motivation and drive are hard to keep alive
When it takes half your energy just to survive

When quarantine renders silence suffocating
Calls make the pandemic feel less isolating
But rooms full of Zoom squares with imperfect sound
Aren’t a replacement to having friends around

The threat of the future always looms overhead
Creeping up day by day with its slow-mounting dread
All actions are decided by the justification
of if it looks good on college applications

Time’s measured by test dates and As drop to Ds
All that counts is acing the dreaded SATs
The pressure’s immense, and though it keeps you intact
You only last so long before starting to crack

Half-hearted essays not fully written right
Not learning, just turning it in before midnight
Losing time, losing friends, losing points, losing sleep
Under-eye bags have never looked quite this deep

You start to wonder if it’s all in your head
So you find upperclassmen to ask them instead
But when you reach out, hoping someone will hear—

They answer, “Tough luck. Welcome to junior year.”