



Brave New Words

Brave New Words

2018/19 ANTHOLOGY

A Message from the Burnaby Board of Education

We're pleased to present the 2018/19 Words Anthology, "Brave New Words." It takes courage to submit your writing for scrutiny, and it takes bravery to express your thoughts, emotions, and views in the written word.

Unique to Burnaby Schools, the Words Writing Project has annually showcased the best in student poetry and prose since 1985. This anthology of original work is both a celebration of student writing and a chance to explore the opportunity to become a published author. Career exploration is one of the important opportunities the Burnaby School District provides our students.

Congratulations to the more than 100 students whose writing was selected for publication. All students from Kindergarten through Grade 12 had the opportunity to submit in either English or French. We are proud of all of you for bravely submitting your work. One should never underestimate the power of words.



Gary
Wong
Chair



Jen
Mezei
Vice-Chair



Bill
Brassington



Peter
Cech



Christine
Cunningham



Larry
Hayes



Ryan
Stewart



www.burnabyschools.ca

Brave New Words



WORDS Writing Project

2018/19 Anthology

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



INDEX

Grades K-2			Page
Chen, Reimi	Marlborough	The Adventure to the North Pole	3
DeCoste, Breton	Aubrey	My Dreams of Freedom	1
Grewal, Mia	Cascade Heights	Fish	1
Jay, Nikki	Kitchener	Magical Forest	4
Jiang, Abigail	Buckingham	Alevins Hatching	1
Lee, Colton	Brantford	Penguins	2
Moskalenko, Ava	Marlborough	Si J'étais une fleur	2
Moxam, Sabet	South Slope	The Snow Storm	5
Okazaki, Aika	Kitchener	Summer! Summer!	1
Ramos, Sebastian	Brantford	Quand un flocon tombe	2
Ukryn, Sienna	Clinton	February Lunar Moon	2
Wang, Alice	Brantford	Un oeuf de saumon	4
Grades 3-5			
Barn, Saasha	Marlborough	Le temps gaspillé	6
Bhangu, Harkirat	Second Street	Canada	7
Brown-John, Nora	Brentwood Park	The Devastating News	12
Chan, Alice	Clinton	The Red Mittens	11
Chen, Anita	Suncrest	The Legend of the Four Seasons	11
Diep, Mia	Suncrest	Escape from Reality	8
Jung, Kaira	Brentwood Park	The Darkness Within Me	9
Lee, Bronwyn	Brantford	Personification of a Chili Pepper	6
Lee, Isaiah	Brantford	Monkey Madness	9
Li, Joone	Suncrest	Winter's Spell	6
Li, Tyler	Taylor Park	Mysterious Mist	7
Lin, Leon	Lakeview	I Am From	8
McGowan, Sophie	Chaffey-Burke	Decisions	7
Patel, Mahee	Kitchener	Music	6
Polansky Richardson, Apoll	Taylor Park	The Storm Cloud	7
Rajarithnam, Ajay	Buckingham	Hope	8
Tavakoli Saberi, Arnica	Maywood	The Story of the Crow	10
Titievsky, Noa	Stoney Creek	Nature's Power	8
Toews, Vincent	Taylor Park	The Facility	12
Yee, Sherman	Suncrest	The Seasons of Life	6
Zhang, Sophia	Brentwood Park	Nervousness	10
Grades 6-7			
Afadish, Aymen	Morley	I Am From	16
Carlsen, Maya	Clinton	Residential Schools	17
Chen, Adam	Buckingham	Writer's Block	16
Chou, Ling	South Slope	Dusk to Dawn	15
da Palma, Alex	Chaffey-Burke	Black Belt	13
Dellebuur O'Connor, Sadie	Kitchener	If we could just	13
Fessahaye, Mahanaim	Morley	I am from	15
Foltz, Sarah	Sperling	Young Life	16
Kelman, Samantha	Brentwood Park	Freedom in Reach	19
Lam, Joli	Lakeview	Estuary: Where the river meets the sea	20
Lee, Candace	Buckingham	The Old Piano	14
Lee, Noah	Brantford	My Life as an Eraser	21
Liu, Ryan	Buckingham	The Feeling of Getting Lost in a Book	14
Lu, Aisling	Chaffey-Burke	My Job	15
Luo, Catherine	Stoney Creek	My Heart Soars	17

INDEX

Grades 6-7 <i>Continued</i>			Page
Maio, Lauren	Kitchener	Path of the Gods	18
Marchetto, Lucas	Westridge	Discrimination	13
Paz, Sevie	Lyndhurst	Recovering from Darkness	19
Sagal, Harishveer	Westridge	Discrimination	13
Sahukhan, Alishba	Westridge	I wish, but...	13
Serdar, Zoe	Brentwood Park	Black Figures in the Sky	18
Spooner, Eala	Westridge	Je Fuis	17
Su, Sunny	Chaffey-Burke	Reality	14
Vu, Rachel	Second Street	Art of the Eye	14
Zhou, Alicia	Brantford	Un jour dans la vie d'un dé	21
Zhou, Jaden	Westridge	Discrimination	13
Grade 8			
Chui, Hana	Moscrop	Les Réseaux Sociaux	23
Goudron, Lindsay	Burnaby Central	Conquering	22
Li, Melanie	Burnaby Central	Lullaby	22
Li, Melanie	Burnaby Central	Painting Outside The Lines	24
Logan, Clare	Burnaby Central	A tide pool of life	24
Ogalino, Cassandra	Byrne Creek	Who am I?	23
Sriragu, Kaviya	Burnaby Mountain	Ode to the Cello	22
Grades 9 -10			
Chen, Andrew	Burnaby South	Can Dreams Die?	27
Chow, Aiden	Burnaby South	The Woman in the Store	25
Cowpar-Mark, Maya	Moscrop	La Réalité	31
Dublin, Denice	Burnaby South	The Stranger Across the Table	42
Emes, Chloe	Burnaby Mountain	Life is Not a Fairy Tale	28
Gaythorpe, Emily	Burnaby Mountain	Mentality	28
Han, Jenna	Cariboo Hill	Bioluminescence	40
Hofmann, Lindsay	Burnaby Mountain	Perfect	29
Ip, Shana	Moscrop	Qui je suis	41
Jang, Annika	Burnaby North	Jeanne d'Arc	26
Khanlou, Ida	Alpha Secondary	The Sands of Time	30
Kuban, Anika	Burnaby South	Golden Veil	37
Lee, Kayla	Alpha Secondary	Portrait	25
Li, William	Burnaby North	Everyone Has a Part	29
Liu, Emily	Burnaby North	Sirènes	39
Logan, Amelia	Cariboo Hill	The Side of Frosty We Don't See	44
Ma, Emily	Alpha Secondary	Cyanide Seeds	26
Majstorovic, Mia	Burnaby South	Anthropocene	38
Paco, Emilie	Burnaby South	Nobody Likes You	35
Pallister, Sophia	Burnaby North	Mathematics	30
Park, Jessica	Burnaby Mountain	Fantasy	27
Richardson, Kaia	Burnaby South	Her Little Brown Bag	43
Scott, Annette	Cariboo Hill	Crocodile Tears	28
Shaban, Negar	Moscrop	Cherry Pie	27
Song, Eugenie	Burnaby Mountain	Bus Stop	30
Villareal, Alexei	Byrne Creek	The Apple	33
Villareal, Alexei	Byrne Creek	Scuirophobia	32
Yen, Jennifer	Burnaby North	A Search within Itself	36
Zhou, Hugo	Burnaby North	Blizzard	34

INDEX

Grades 11-12			Page
Beharrell, Jinian	Alpha Secondary	A Dark Corner of A Dark Library	55
Chang, Alyssa	Burnaby South	Identity	53
Cui, Hannah	Burnaby North	wish upon a star	51
Dong, Serena	Moscrop	Gray	45
Esmail, Imran	Burnaby Mountain	Ode to postage stamps	50
Ferguson, Skylar	Burnaby Mountain	Imbroglia	56
Han, Julia	Burnaby Mountain	Little Black Dress	47
Huang, Chloe	Burnaby North	First Love	47
Joe, Max	Moscrop	Le temps	50
Kanauchi, Utae	Burnaby North	Like Freshly Dipped Candy	58
Kurahashi, Mika	Burnaby North	Grandma	60
Li, Sarah	Burnaby Mountain	How to Make a T-Shirt	49
Lieu, Erika	Burnaby North	Letter to Lucy	52
Lieu, Erika	Burnaby North	A Leap of Faith	54
Lu, Christina	Moscrop	Une larme	57
Lumowah, Stephanie	Burnaby Mountain	Starshowers	48
Ma, Austin	Moscrop	Le temps	45
Mansouri, Suroor	Burnaby South	My Tall, White Wall	61
McDonald, Elizabeth	Alpha Secondary	The Small Hours	62
Ng, Amy	Moscrop	In the Red	46
Olivares, Karen	Cariboo Hill	Rose Coloured Lenses	49
Park, Alice	Burnaby Mountain	Sunday	46
Petlitsyna, Polina	Burnaby South	Seagulls	46
White, Ella	Burnaby North	Changes	59
Zhang, Jeff	Burnaby Mountain	Roasted	48
Adult Education			
Sakai, Michiko	Burnaby Comm & Cont Ed	Memory of Kagura	63

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

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

Alevins Hatching

Abigail Jiang *Buckingham Elementary*

Silent and still
Eyed eggs
Action is stressful
Needs energy to wobble
Hatching is exhausting
Finally free!

My Dreams of Freedom

Breton DeCoste *Aubrey Elementary*

My dream of freedom is to be successful and have
a lot of money.
My dream of freedom is to laugh and have fun with
my friends.
My dream of freedom is to be happy with who I am.
My dream of freedom is to always love and be
happy.
My dream of freedom is seeing a circus
performance.
My dream of freedom is sticking up for my friends
by using my voice.
My dream of freedom is having fresh water and
keeping my body hydrated.
My dream of freedom is helping and respecting
others.
My dream of freedom of freedom is to explore the
world.
My dream of freedom is to make music that the
world could hear.
These are my dreams of freedom.

Fish

Mia Grewal *Cascade Heights Elementary*

Yellow and orange fish
fish that go
fast!
Fish that glow, fish that don't
Some fish swim to the top
Some fish go to the
bottom
Watching fish is
fun!

Summer! Summer!

Aika Okazaki *Kitchener Elementary*

Summer is bright,
Summer is light
Summer is everything
Shining bright!
In summer,
Kids will play in the pool
With summer shining
Brightly cool!!!



PENGUINS

Colton Lee *Brantford Elementary*

Penguins, penguins waddling across the ice
trying to fill their tummies.

After their dinner their egg starts to wobble.

Crack!

Their chick wants its dinner too.
The chick was very, very hungry.

So mommy went to sea.
Her catch was big.

Mommy gave squid and krill from her beak.
The chick ate as much as his
little belly could hold.
Mmmmmm.

Quand un flocon tombe

Sebastian Ramos *École Brantford Élémentaire*

Un flocon de neige est
Doux comme une écharpe
Silencieux comme un espion
Blanc comme un ours polaire
Il vole comme un papillon
Puis il tombe comme une feuille

Si j'étais une fleur

Ava Moskalenko

École Marlborough Élémentaire

Si j'étais une fleur,
Je pousserais partout
Si j'étais une fleur,
J'éclairerais les endroits sombres
Si j'étais une fleur,
J'apporterais de l'espoir aux gens désespérés
Si j'étais une fleur,
Je donnerais un beau parfum aux coins tristes
Si j'étais une fleur,
Je donnerais du miel aux abeilles
Si j'étais une fleur,
Je donnerais la paix aux pays ravagés par la guerre

February Lunar Moon

Sienna Ukryn *Clinton Elementary*

Spectacular moon, freezing in the dark
Glorious trees are swaying with their leaves
It gets colder and colder
My hands freeze with delight
Fireworks explode with happiness
Blossoms bloom in the field of lucky golden
berries
They stand up silently
Flowers bloom gently
Every piece of nature is alive
Quiet winds howl through the forests
As plants quietly grow!

The Adventure to the North Pole

Reimi Chen *Marlborough Elementary*

Once upon a time there were three kids whose names were Reimi, Yasmin and Jake. They were playing at Reimi's house. Suddenly, they saw Rudolph and the other reindeer pulling Santa's sleigh in the sky.

Jake said, "No way, do you guys see what I see?"

Yasmin said, "Do you mean Santa and his reindeer flying in the sky?"

Reimi said, "Let's jump onto Santa's sleigh!"

The kids called to Santa and jumped into his sleigh. "Yipee!" they shouted.

Santa was surprised to see the kids in his sleigh. He said, "Why are you in my sleigh?"

Reimi said, "We are going to the North Pole with you!"

"Oh very well," said Santa. "You will have to be my human elves and help me get ready for Christmas!"

The children said, "Yes!"

On the way to the North Pole the kids saw a big eagle flying beside them.

"Wow!" said Reimi. "I feel like I'm flying."

Then Jake saw a Canada goose. He said, "Wow, that bird flies really fast!"

Then Yasmin said, "Look, it's an Arctic Fox!"

"Nice," said Reimi. "We must be getting close."

After a few hours, Reimi, Jake and Yasmin got to the North Pole. The kids saw Santa's workshop.

Santa said, "All right, chop, chop, time to get to work everyone."

Santa put Reimi in charge of wrapping presents. Yasmin had to test the toys with all the other elves. Last, but not least, Jake's job was to make the toys for all the good girls and boys.

A few hours later, Reimi was all out of presents. "Oh no, what will I do? What if Santa sees I have no more toys?"

At the toy testing room, all the elves went to bed. The only person left was Yasmin. She kept testing the toys when, CLICK, all the lights went out! Yasmin was very scared. She felt like she was in a bat cave.

In the toy making room, Jake was very busy. He was getting tired from making all the toys. His heart was beating so fast that it almost stopped!

So Reimi, Yasmin and Jake all got together and talked about their problems. They decided to talk to Santa Claus. They said, "We need to go back home because we miss our families!"

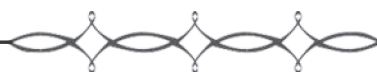
"Ho, ho, ho! I see," said Santa. "I will take you home."

So Santa took the kids home in his sleigh. He said, "Merry Christmas," as he dashed away.

The kids went inside. It was pin quiet so they went to bed.

The next morning Reimi went to the Christmas tree. There were two presents for her, two presents for Yasmin and two presents for Jake. The kids opened their presents... Santa had given them the gift to fly!

Reimi, Yasmin and Jake said, "Merry Christmas everyone!"



Un œuf de saumon

Alice Wang *École Brantford Élémentaire*

Voici ma vie comme œuf de saumon. Je suis un petit œuf de saumon kéta. Je suis très fragile comme la glace. J'ai une coquille rose-orangé et dans ma coquille j'ai un sac vitellin qui me donne la nourriture.

J'ai une vie en dessus d'une roche. J'aime cette vie parce qu'elle me protège contre beaucoup de mes prédateurs. Je sais qu'une vie en dessus d'une roche pour toi n'est pas trop amusant mais pour les œufs de saumon c'est très importante.

J'aime ma bonne maison. Aussi j'aime le silence parce que mon œuf est très fragile et s'il est trop bruyant mon œuf peut mourir. Je ne veux pas mourir. J'aime l'eau fraîche. S'il te plaît quand tu vas à la rivière ne lance pas les déchets comme le plastique ou l'huile. Je préfère une rivière avec l'eau fraîche. Toutes ces choses que j'aime sont très importantes à moi.

Je veux survivre! Je veux éclore pour explorer le monde. Mais si je veux explorer j'ai besoin de nager vite parce qu'il y a beaucoup de prédateurs comme les grands poissons qui encore veulent me manger. Une vie au stade de l'œuf de saumon est très difficile. Ça c'est la vie comme œuf de saumon!

Magical Forest

Nikki Jay *Kitchener Elementary*

It was a Sunday. Little Mia could not wait to go hiking. She packed her water bottle, hat, and fan in her little pretty backpack. Finally, it was time to go hiking. As Mia walked by the trees, she saw a squirrel. The squirrel was trapped in a hunter's trap. But luckily Mia didn't have to save the squirrel, because the squirrel's friend came to the rescue.

Little Mia kept on walking and walking, until she saw some naughty boys scratching a poor tree with sharp little knives. Mia scared the boys away bravely. She had an idea. She got some brown paint and painted the tree. Suddenly something magical happened. The tree came to life! The tree said, "You have kindly helped me and now I shall help you." But Mia just laughed and said, "How can a tree help a human being?" The tree said, "Wait and see!"

Mia continued her hike. Soon Mia had to cross a long big lake. The tree was there to help! Soon Mia realized that the words of the tree had come true. The tree bent over the lake and let Mia step on its back. Mia thanked the tree and went home thinking, "From now on, I will always respect nature!"



The Snow Storm

Sabet Moxam *South Slope Elementary*

It was winter. The snow was falling softly and gently. All of the children were playing in the snow. All except one kid. Her name was Clara. She had long golden hair and a pink satin glittery bow. She was six years old. She wasn't playing outside because her parents weren't home. They were in Japan!

They had been in Japan for a long time. She missed them a lot and now she was starting to worry. You see, her parents said to her that they would only be in Japan for the whole summer, but unfortunately they have been in Japan since last summer! "Maybe they got trapped?" Clara wondered worriedly.

More than anything, Clara wanted to go to Japan with her parents. She would sneak out at midnight, since she was staying with her grandmother. The next night she woke up and snatched a flashlight. She got dressed, put her tablet in her pocket and crept down the stairs and out the door.

She shivered in the cold. Although it was chilly, she kept going. She would do anything to get her parents home. Good thing she had packed lots of food in her dad's backpack. It was loaded with food for her and her parents! It was going to take DAYS to find her parents. Just then a snow storm started. The snow storm went on for ever and ever. Then when she had given up all her hope, she noticed the smallest snowflake ever! She caught it with her mitten. She noticed that the snowflake wasn't melting! It was growing bigger! When it popped, she noticed a map inside it! On the top of the map there were the words "How to Find Your Parents." She took the map and followed it to a lake. When she went to the lake, she sat and ate a bit of food from the backpack. After resting a little bit, she set on again. Then she got to an ocean. Here she gave up all the hope because she had walked for many days. A magic ground hog, who had dug a hole under the bench, said, "Do not give up hope! Keep trying to find your parents!"

"I can't!" Clara said. "I've been searching far and wide and I can't even find a foot print that belongs to either of them!" She burst into tears. "There, there don't cry," the groundhog said to Clara. The groundhog then pointed out a cottage not far from there. Next to the cottage was a hole in the ground. "What could this be?" she wondered. Clara took out her flashlight and looked in the hole, there were her parents! They said that they had been thrown into the hole by evil witches. Clara went to the side of the cottage. She got a ladder. She quickly and quietly helped her parents out of the hole. The 3 of them set off happily for home.

Le temps gaspillé

Saasha Barn *École Marlborough Élémentaire*

Quand je suis censé faire mes devoirs,
 Je dessine
 Quand je suis supposé pratiquer le ballon panier,
 Je regarde la télé
 Quand je suis censé nettoyer ma chambre,
 J'écoute de la musique
 Tout ce temps que les gens disent gaspillé,
 M'apporte de la joie
 Je les aime
 Selon moi, les seuls moments gaspillés sont les
 moments de malheur
 Quand je fais des choses que je n'aime pas

The Seasons of Life

Sherman Yee *Suncrest Elementary*

The blooming buds of Cherry Blossoms –
 They orchestrate
 The arrival of Spring.
 The birds soar in the bright blue sky -
 Seeking food for their young.
 The sparkling of the silky river
 Flowing with a unique grace
 As the day gets brighter and longer
 The petals start falling peacefully down the trees
 Trees form buds to sleep in the cold
 The birds busy molting their feather -
 And stop dawn's chorus
 Rivers and streams flowing low in summer
 People cherishing the beauty of rivers
 Trees cover with ember-red leaves and sun-flame gold
 Leaves falling majestically carpeting the ground
 Birds travel down South with flapping wings
 Flying fearlessly in the autumn night
 Courageous salmon leaping up high-
 Spawning to leave legacy behind
 Bare trees scatter the snowy land
 Stand sleeping in the chilly and gloomy night
 Birds down south awaiting patiently-
 For the departure of winter
 Frozen rivers slumbering through the icy days-
 Surviving the cold and dusky time

Winter's Spell

Joone Li *Suncrest Elementary*

The world turns from green to white.
 The adults grunt and the children dance with glee,
 Catching snowflakes on their cold, wet tongues.
 Wheels screech, sleds dive,
 The children's hollers can be heard miles away.

Suddenly, the trees sag
 Groaning with the weight of snow.
 Frost envelops the Earth,
 Making crunchy grass and frozen leaves.

That is winter's wonderful spell.

Personification of a
Chili PepperBronwyn Lee *Brantford Elementary*

The way you light your fire is delicious
 The sassy spice makes you ambitious
 Of sweet peppers you are suspicious
 Your zest just seems delicious

Music

Mahee Patel *Kitchener Elementary*

M – musical rhythms that go beyond imagination
U – unseen stories in a magical language
S – secrets hidden within each line
I – insightful meanings only some can see
C – captivates life's ups and downs

Mysterious Mist

Tyler Li *Taylor Park Elementary*

The mist roams freely like a hobo from place to
place adventuring the depths of the world
It is enveloped in a mystic blanket of wonders
The mist's playful nature roams to its hearts
content in its endless game of tag
Motherly and overprotective, it nourishes the
parched plants in the vicinity
offering shelter to the town's inhabitants from
dangers unknown
The sun's golden rays part through the mist-like
curtains
The mist takes itself to yet another city setting

Canada

Harkirat Bhangu

Second Street Community School

Maple syrup with pancake breakfast
Lunch poutine that's my routine
Rivers give me shivers in the Poles
Free samples from Costco
Movies, fun and flag red and white
Rainy days, sunny days, warm as toast

The Storm Cloud

Apollo Polansky Richardson

Taylor Park Elementary

The gloomy, dark storm cloud's reflection on the honey crisp grass,
makes it dull.
For it is not only the cloud that is pouting,
But included in that duo is the mournful grass with dew droplets rolling
off their dark sides.
The melancholy cloud was snubbed by the sun for not shining on him.
Mr. Empathetic Sun feeling for the sorrowful storm cloud,
Decided to shine his bright flashlight through the body of mist.
Right then,
The dark storm clout became the most alluring cloud ever,
With light radiating off its transparent body.
As a gift of thankfulness,
The dazzling cloud made itself a blanket for the bright sun itself.

Decisions

Sophie McGowan *Chaffey-Burke Elementary*

What is a decision?
A choice
matter of opinion
Whether or not
I will
Or won't.
One decision
can change everything.
The way we think.
The way we are.
Who we were.
And who we will be.
I am
indecisive
yet
I am always the one
who must make the decision
but how can I choose
when there is no right or wrong?

We are constantly
surrounded
by the millions of
possibilities
all relying on a decision.
Your decision.
Choice is a privilege
so decide now
before they decide for you.

I Am From

Leon Lin *Lakeview Elementary*

I am from a plastic plate
 From dumplings and salmon
 I am from the clean organization
 Messy, dirty, is never my thing
 I am from a rose
 That looks pretty from the outside
 but spiky in the inside
 I'm from musical talent day, black hair
 From Lin's and Hsu
 I'm from the joking family and staying cozy together
 From never smoking and never talking to people you
 don't know
 I'm from listening to my parents talk about me when I
 was young
 I'm from new Taipei city
 Eating white rice and delicious mangoes
 From my chef father with skillful hand making tofu
 The mother that controls the whole family
 Childhood pictures in every corner of the house
 Never give up no matter what situation it is.

Hope

Ajay Rajarathinam *Buckingham Elementary*

Shouting
 Screaming
 It is the gallant act to end all wars
 Soldiers dropping dead around me like little kids who
 just dropped their ice cream cone.
 Tanks rolling in like monsters waiting to take their next
 meal
 Bombs dropping overhead filling me with blackness
 and dread
 Kids desperately trying to outrun the ferocious
 darkness ready to swallow them up
 Parents filling up the oceans on land with their tears.
 All of a sudden the blackness ceases
 Children are helped up with as much care as if they
 were a flower
 Soldiers are taken to hospital holding on to their last
 breath as if it is a jewel from their queen
 This is the day we will never forget, a day of violence,
 Teaching us love for others, and most of all hope.

Escape from Reality

Mia Diep *Suncrest Elementary*

I blink. It is all different.
 My vision is cloudy, but in a few seconds I can just
 make out auburn maple leaves on trees.
 I rise. Speechless.
 Unaware of my location,
 I start gliding across the smooth yellow pavement.
 Everything is silent, except the rustle of trees.
 I inhale the scent of cinnamon and tread deeper.
 As I reach the end of the forest, I spot a river.
 I pace over to the river and glance at my own
 reflection.
 I try touching the water, but the water is frozen.
 I pick up a loose shard of ice and lift it up.
 Its multi-coloured shine glimmers through the dim
 sunset.
 Suddenly, I hear a distant barking behind me.
 I whirl around. I find a wolf running over to me.
 The wolf barks softly at me so
 I stoop to its muzzle and touch it.
 Night has fallen to reveal the twinkling stars.
 I look up into the air. Amazed.
 I look around the land and take in everything.
 Then, a door slams. I blink.
 I am back at school in class with my math textbook.
 Now, back to reality.

Nature's Power

Noa Titievsky

Stoney Creek Community School

The freshness of the trees
 The running of the water
 The fragrance of the air
 Speak to me

The darkness in the night
 The thunder of the waterfall
 The chirping of the birds
 Speak to me

The rhythm of the sea
 The brightness of the sun
 The raindrops on the flowers
 They speak to me and I imagine
 Nature's power

Monkey Madness

Isaiah Lee *Brantford Elementary*

Once there was a small town near the jungle called, Banana town, which was a town for monkeys. It was perfect for monkeys, with food, water, shelter, and everything a nice and healthy monkey needed. And in one medium sized house lived the Wamp family. The Wamp family loved to travel. They went all around the world, and barely stayed in their home. There were four members of the family. There was the younger brother named Hehe and the older brother, Haha. The dad was Pepo, and the mom was Pipo.

One day, they went hiking in the Kronky woods, named after a terribly dangerous bear at the centre of it. Even other bears were scared of him. As they got close to the middle, they all started to head back home, but a wonderful banana tree got Hehe and Haha's attention. They started to run towards it as their parents chased after them. All of a sudden, they heard a loud growl. Everybody froze with fear. That could only mean one thing. Kronky was watching them. "RUN!" Pepo yelled, "Get back home!" As they ran they heard loud footsteps. "He's catching up!" shouted Haha. At that moment, Hehe tripped on a root. Then everything turned black.

When he woke up, he was in a dark place, stuck in a cage. "I must be in a cave" he thought. Then he grabbed a twig on the ground and used it as a key. When he got out, he found his other family members in cages and unlocked them too. As they started to walk out of the cave, Kronky showed up. He looked as surprised as they were. "H-h-how d-did you g-get out!?" he stammered. Then, Haha kicked him right in the snout. "OW!" grunted Kronky, rubbing his nose, "You will pay for that." All of a sudden, his massive claw slashed at them. Luckily, the monkeys darted away just in time. "Get back here, you rats!!!" screamed Kronky. The monkeys could see the rage in his eyes. They climbed a nut tree and pelted Kronky with dozens of nuts. Soon, Kronky couldn't take it anymore. He let out a deafening roar, and slammed his head against the tree with full power, knocking it down. The monkey jumped down and ran away, but got trapped in a circle of large blueberry bushes.

When Kronky caught up, they realized they were cornered. "Your time is up monkeys" he growled, and went straight at Haha with an open mouth. But Pipo threw a handful of blueberries in Kronky's mouth. He froze. Then chewed and swallowed. "These are really good!" he said "Where did you get them?" Pipo showed him all of the blueberry bushes and soon he was feasting on them. Then he offered the monkeys some. Soon they were talking and eating and became friends. They had to leave because it was getting dark, so they said goodbye and went home. And every week, Pipo would give Kronky a fresh basket of blueberries. And the Wamp family was never afraid of Kronky again.

The Darkness Within Me

Kaira Jung *Brentwood Park Elementary*

I can feel it burning inside of me; my shoulders getting more and more tense with my hands in tight, hard fists. Clenching my teeth trying to control my emotions to not burst out in fury. My eyebrows slanted inwards; eyes glaring straight ahead with my nose scrunched up. Wanting to crush something with my bare hands to let out my rage. I tried to not explode, but I couldn't hold it back no more. Breathing heavily and squinting my eyes, I started screaming loudly; yelling my head off. I didn't know what had happened to me. They looked so scared that the colour in their face seemed to as if it was draining away. Who and what was this monster I had become?

The Story of the Crow

Arnica Tavakoli Saberi *Maywood Community School*

Once there was a crow who was very happy and satisfied in life, but one day he saw a swan, and he thought to himself “Wow!! That swan is white, and I am black. That swan must be the happiest bird in the world,” thought the crow looking at the swan with a serious bad look.

After a while, the crow decided to go to the swan and say, “Good morning swan, isn’t it a beautiful morning? And also I think you are the luckiest, because you are the most beautiful bird in the world.” The swan responded “Actually I think that the parrot is. She has colorful wings, but I don’t. You should go to the parrot, not me.” And that’s when the adventure started for the crow!

The crow flew to parrot and started the conversation. “Hello parrot. You must be very lucky to have such colourful wings!” said the crow, while trying to get the parrot’s attention. “No. The peacock is, he has big feathers, blue and green,” said the parrot looking down in shame. “But, don’t you? I think that your wings are gorgeous and scrumptious!!”cried the crow trying to cheer up the parrot. “Thank you, but when you see the peacock, you will understand what, and who I am talking about,” said the parrot pointing out the way the crow should go to find the peacock. The crow gave it a second thought “Okay , I, as the crow shall go over the mountains and sail the seven seas and find that peacock!!” the crow said joking. “Great. I wish you good luck!” said the parrot flying away.

When the crow arrived to the zoo, he thought “Whoa! This place is huge!!” After flying around the zoo two times, he found the peacock. He went to his cage and said “Whoa! This place is huge!! After flying around the zoo two times he found the peacock. He went to his cage and said “Whoa, so parrot was right. You really are beautiful, but why are you in a cage?” asked the crow. “That’s the problem. Millions of people come to see me everyday, and that’s why I am kept in a cage. You might not be beautiful, but you are free in the wild and you can fly wherever you want. I wish I was you.” The crow had nothing to say. All he was doing was staring at the peacock in surprise. He tried expressing his thoughts, and finally, he responded, “Wow. All those beautiful words you just said, made me change my thinking. Thank you!” After that, the crow realized he wasn’t beautiful but it was more important to be free and he was happy again and never compared himself to others!!

Nervousness

Sophia Zhang *Brentwood Park Elementary*

Trembling, I look around. I see people talking to others. No one else looks nervous. A huge lump grows in my throat. My knees fall into each other and touch in the middle. I feel shaky. My hairs slowly start rising.

Then I hear my mom say “Take a deep breath, you’re going soon.” My lump grows bigger. Then taking my mom’s advice, I open my mouth ever so slightly and air goes in and out. My lump gets smaller and my hairs go back to normal.

Then I start warming up. My knees bend and release. Suddenly a loud announcement goes on and my mom reminds me “you are in group 7 and you’re last, so you will be soon.” My knees go shaky as I walk to the stadium. Number 1,2,3,4 and 5 are finished. It’s my turn to shine. I walk, and take my 1st step onto the ice.

After I’m done, the results come in. “That wasn’t so bad after all,” I think over and over again. Then we take our places on the podium. I stand proudly and receive my silver medal.



The Red Mittens

Alice Chan Clinton Elementary

Fall goes and the cold winter comes. We sit patiently in the dark closet waiting to be picked up. Suddenly, SQUEAK! The scratched wooden door opens. The little girl picks up our cousin, a big purple coat, which is her favorite color. After, she picks us up too. We get very excited. She puts us on her little hands. We feel her warm cozy hand and feel relief in our bodies. She takes her right hand and one of us feels a smooth wrapper. Then both of us rips open the shiny wrap and we also smell the fresh scent of toothpaste as we go near her mouth. After a while, she finally opens the brown door. We breathe in the cold winter breezes. We watch her walk as her feet sinks into the snow, which is a fluffy cotton ball. When we hike up to the icy mountain, it gets colder and colder. She slides again and again down a slippery hill. We slowly get wetter and wetter. At the end, we get soaking wet, but it is loads of fun. She takes us off and leaves us on a wooden bench and goes inside for some hot cocoa. We can hear the cold wind blowing against us. Snowballs form on our bodies. SWOOSH! We slide off the wooden bench and into the snow. After some time, flakes of snow start falling again. Soon we are buried in the white snow. We are lost. We lay there forever and ever.

The Legend of the Four Seasons

Anita Chen Suncrest Elementary

Who decided when the seasons change? Who stopped to war between Summer and Winter that nearly ended the world? There is an old legend about the seasons, moon, sun and star.

A long time ago, so long ago that we may never know the exact time, there lived seven- seven what? We could call them spirits, but they could have been animals. Again, we may never know. Two of the spirits were enemies. Their names were Summer and Winter. They hated each other because they were both beautiful. Summer was warm and kind, but she could still scorch her enemies and that's what she tried to do to Winter. Winter could be caring, but the moment she met Summer she flew into a rage. The two rivals tried to destroy each other multiple times. One day when Summer and Winter were fighting one of their most vicious fights, Sun shouted "Enough! Stop fighting. It does no one good."

But of course Summer and Winter ignored him. They were too caught up in their own fight so they couldn't see the dying animals and plants. After he was ignored he called a meeting with Moon and Star, when they saw the war on Earth, they started to panic.

"The poor animals and plants," she cried, "Star, Sun, we must save them."

"Of course," Sun said taken aback by her urgency, "but I don't know what to do."

"Well, we could separate them," Star said thoughtfully.

"How would we do it?" Moon asked, "They would do anything to kill each other."

"You could make sure they never meet each other again.," suggested Star.

"That's a good idea," Sun said thoughtfully, "We could put them to sleep."

"Wait, I have an idea," Moon said suddenly, "we can put them to sleep and they have half the year to show off their beauty. While one of them is awake, the other is sleeping."

"A good idea, but how will we know one won't wake up and see the other sleeping?" asked Star

"We will have a border that they can't see across," Sun said sadly, for he hated deceiving his once upon a time friends.

"Okay, what will be the border?" Moon asked.

"I will create two sprites to go between Summer and Winter," Sun said.

"Is that agreed?" Star asked hopefully.

"Yes," they both agreed.

So Sun started to create to two sprites. One he would call Spring, who will go after Winter. The other was to go after Summer. Sun named him Fall. The two sprites restored peace to the world.

The Devastating News

Nora Brown-John *Brentwood Park Elementary*

Once my mom broke the news to me, I collapsed. My eyes started welling up. My usually happy smile was overtaken with a cloudy and gloomy look. My cold and clammy hands reached up to cover my face, but it was too late. All I could think was “why me”? My crystalline tears ran uncontrollably down my face and I wiped them away with my ratty, torn up sleeve. I didn’t want all the sadness to control me. Then I started in what my mom and I call the ‘waterworks’. I realized from this day forward nothing will ever be the same. Now we have one less member in our family, our sweet dog, Lavender.

The Facility

Vincent Toews *Taylor Park Elementary*

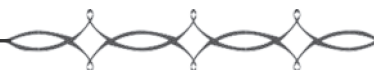
Back then, eighteen years ago, there was a facility. In the facility, deadly chemicals and biohazardous substances were tested on people. The people on whom were tested were criminals and getting tested was their punishment. They were also tested on for research. I worked in that facility.

There was never a problem until June 21st, 2000. On that day, we were testing a biohazardous substance that we had never tested before. We called the substance “789.” I entered the room where the test took place. There was thick glass separating me and the test subject whose name was Clyde. A man wearing a hazmat suit injected 789 into Clyde. Clyde had no immediate symptoms, but within the next hour he was coughing. I wrote the test results on a piece of paper on my clipboard. I had to leave for another test so I exited the room.

I entered the room where the next test took place. This room was a little larger than the last one. In a half hour, I heard the alarm. I asked the control room what was going on through my radio “Why have you activated the alarm?” I questioned.

“We have activated the alarm due to an escaped test subject carrying 789. This compound is contagious so sector 5 is under quarantine and the doors at the entrance of the sector are locked,” replied someone from the control room. I turned my radio off. A group of people and I rushed out of the room and entered a hallway, and found an injured man. The man’s face and clothes were bloody and his radio was missing. “What happened to you?” I questioned. “Clyde hit me in the face and legs with a baton. He also took my radio so I couldn’t ask for help,” he replied. Two people helped the man up. Then I heard a scream from another room around the corner in the hallway. I went to investigate and found a dead man on the floor. Then Clyde came out from around the corner and I shrieked in terror. I sprinted through the hallway and hoped I would lose him but he was still right behind me. I was getting tired and thought he would catch up and kill me but then I saw a restroom and quickly went in and locked the door. I was gasping for breath but knew I was safe. I turned on my radio and explained what just happened. Then I just sat there and waited patiently for somebody to report that Clyde was contained, but nobody did.

After a while I decided to risk it and exit the restroom. When I opened the door Clyde was not there so I walked down the hallway. In the corridor, there were bodies on the floor. Some of the bodies were dead and the people who were alive were infected with 789. The sight of those bodies was the most horrible thing I have ever seen. I kept moving through the hallway, but then the lights suddenly went out. I could barely see anything. I was terrified. I went to turn on the emergency generators, but before I got there I ran into Clyde. I dashed away and he chased after me. He was slower than before because 789 was weakening him. I went into a room and hid behind a counter, I knew Clyde would eventually find me. I was losing hope until I saw a baton on the floor. So I picked up the baton and struck Clyde in the legs so he couldn’t move, then I made sure he wouldn’t escape by blocking the door. I explained what happened to the control room through my radio. All the people that were infected with 789 ended up dying. After that whole issue, the facility was forced to be shut down. That was the most frightening day of my life.



I wish, but. . .

Alishba Sahukhan *Westridge Elementary*

I wish to speak up
 But my throat is choked
 I wish to cry
 Yet the rivers of my eyes run dry
 I wish to sing my screams
 But my melody is muted
 I wish to fly up high
 Yet my wings are tied
 I wish to run free
 But my feet are planted
 There's nothing I can do
 My life is planned, my story is written
 Yet I am not the author

Discrimination

**Lucas Marchetto, Harishveer Sagal,
 Jaden Zhou** *Westridge Elementary*

Hatred in the world
 Emotions are twirled
 Color and race
 Mocked in face
 Words bringing pain
 Without much gain
 Puncturing the mind,
 Down the grim lane
 Depression leads from there
 No one can give care
 For an individual
 Isolated
 Drowning
 Stuck in despair
 Carrying feelings inside
 Without anyone who may provide
 Anything that can help
 The individual yelps
 As he is caught
 In a room of darkness
 Feelings of loneliness
 And sadness,
 Words
 Pelting one like a stone
 Leaving dents in bone
 Never healed
 Nor forgotten...

Black Belt

Alex da Palma *Chaffey-Burke Elementary*

Hard to achieve
 Focus
 Self control
 Indomitable spirit
 Strength
 Role model
 Common sense
 Sit ups, push ups, deep squats
 Bruises
 Trust
 Leading by example
 Patience
 Self defence, sparing
 Perseverance
 Determination
 Positive environment
 Achievable

If we could just

Sadie Dellebuur O'Connor
Kitchener Elementary

If we could just listen
 If we could just care
 If we could all love
 We wouldn't be so bare

 If we could just laugh
 If we could just live
 If we could just smile
 And try to forgive

 If we could just help
 If we could just be aware
 If we could be ourselves
 And add our own flair

 Wouldn't that be something
 If we could have all those things
 Be accepted for who we are
 Feel comfortable in our own skins

 Yet the world isn't like that
 At least not yet
 That's why we have to keep trying
 And we'll get it, don't fret

The Old Piano

Candace Lee *Buckingham Elementary*

The wood scratched,
The keys yellowed,
Yet the old piano sits.

Every time, whenever I play
It simply fills my heart with joy.
Every note, so clear and crisp,
Every sound so artfully instilled upon thin air.

Yet, one day I forgot about the piano,
Slowly, the piano died,
The notes became dull and rough,
The sound brought no joy,
Just sadness and pain.

All I could manage as I stared at the piano
Was no less than a murmur,
"I'm sorry".

Now, the old piano sits,
It still brings me joy and pleasant memories,
But it also brought me misery.

The Feeling of Getting Lost in a Book

Ryan Liu *Buckingham Elementary*

Curl up on your bed with a book on your hand,
You open it up and the feeling is quite grand,
Fall so deeply in this imagined world, wonder inside
your head,
As walls around you fall away, and words build new
ones in their stead,
You feel inquisitive, to peaceful, to extremely
intense,
As you traverse with the characters through merry
times and suspense,
Get lost in the intricacies of the world they're
painting,
In the nuances of their creativity, flowing and
changing,
Twisting into worlds fabricated out of thin air,
Let your problems dissipate without care,
Forget that there is anything other than you and the
world in your hands.

Art of the Eye

Rachel Vu *Second Street Community School*

The weeping sky cleansed the world with its tears,
mirroring sidewalks of the city. Delicate drops of
fresh precipitation rolled down the stained glass
windows, only to be cut short by an end,
disappearing into absolute nothingness with having
been in existence for only a few mere seconds.

"The rain won't hurt you."

Perhaps it had been the only truth I've ever been
told coming from you. So here I stand, gazing upon
the same sky Vincent Van Gogh once had when
painting the *Starry Night*, failing to notice the water
dampening my shoes, the same ones I wore the
day we first encountered.

Darling, you were my Mona Lisa. The moment we
met, I knew your mesmerizing beauty was meant to
be captured and displayed for the thousands and
thousands of years to come.

Reality

Sunny Su *Chaffey-Burke Elementary*

Blue water valleys
Pink cherry blossoms
How I wish I can see them again.
Instead I see:
Grey cloudy skies
Big trashy oceans.
How are we going to survive?
Green grassy hills
Turn into big garbage dumps.
Beautiful evergreen trees
Turn into little stumps.
What have us humans done?
When big factories roam,
They take away the little creature's home.
What will we do next?
We eat and sleep in plastic
We shoo the birds away.
We don't provide a good environment
To all who want to stay
In a beautiful green land.

My Job

Aisling Lu *Chaffey-Burke Elementary*

I will be an artist.
 No one will ever say
 I will be an engineer.
 I can earn lots of money,
 As an engineer
 I will accomplish nothing.
 As an artist
 I will succeed.
 If I become an engineer
 I will never be seen.
 I will be nobody.
 As an artist
 I will amaze everyone.
 If I become an engineer
 I will be invisible.
 Being an artist is my future.
 No one will ever tell me
 I will be an engineer.
 (Now read in reverse.)

Dusk to Dawn

Ling Chou *South Slope Elementary*

The sky is dark, the moon is bright,
 Footsteps cut across the night.
 The air is cold, the wind is dry,
 Branches scrape across the sky.

Leaves twist in miniature tornadoes,
 Dirt bubble like miniature volcanoes.
 Creaking trunks and ghostly moans,
 Bare trees wave their brittle bones.

Skeletal hands claw at feet,
 Lingering scent of rotting meat.
 Gnarled trunks split in knotted fingers,
 Ravens' eyes shining and eager.

Hopelessly lost, frozen to the bone,
 Twisted creatures hunt alone.
 Owls hoot in trees' crown,
 The coiled path spirals down.

Inky heavens lighten above,
 Panicked breath came in puffs.
 Home should be close. Reach it soon.
 Glow starts to ebb from moon.

New light drives sore feet to run.
 At all costs, avoid the sun.
 Blackness is a friend of mine,
 Slowly losing a battle with time.

With the brilliance comes piercing pain.
Night, please take over again!

I Am From

Mahanaim Fessahaye *Morley Elementary*

I am Mahanaim.

I am from the dusty roads of Sudan where the beggars are on the street.

I am from crowded apartments to helping newcomers move in.

I am from a little red blanket and a big comfy bed which was a luxury where I used to live.

I am from a big white bird flying us to a new world.

I am from laughter and love for days to come.

I am from a big family dinner that left you laughing all night.

I am from speeches and soccer and sleeping all day.

I am from UBC to a great scientist who I wish I could be.

I am from freedom and liberty for years and years to come.

I am Mahanaim.

Young Life

Sarah Foltz *Sperling Elementary*

Tick, tick
seconds,
days,
years,
a lifetime
passes
with the blink,
of my left eye,
along the cycle
we've found,
like all
the others,
with laughs
and tears,
to relish
these moments

our hearts
worn smooth
by the river,
of time,

slowly fading
into sprinkles
of life,
eaten,
with each slice
of birthday pie,
signaling
a year gone,
over.
never to tick
and tock,
by me,
again

but I
can still see
those hills,
in the distance,
beneath the stars
of hope

Writer's Block

Adam Chen *Buckingham Elementary*

The idea that built up.
Your perfect story.
You arrive home to write your dreams.
You sit on your computer chair.
A grin crawls all across your face.
You begin to type.

It's been hours now.
And your story comes to a stop
Dragons, Fairies, Aliens, Vampires.
Wiped out by a SINGLE
Writer's block.

You stand there devastated.
You can't do anything about it.
Your gaze fixed on the floor.
Your dream story.
Forever untold.

I Am From

Aymen Afadish *Morley Elementary*

I am Aymen
I am from Sudan,
And the rough floors beneath our feet.
I am from the small dark golden stool that sat in the corner of our family photographs.
I am from a tiny house that could barely fit our family.
From that small house that was jammed packed with cousins, babies, one bathroom, and a television
that played our favourite comedy.
I am from a small shirt that is light blue and has butterflies on it.
I am from my brothers, Mulu, Mukhtar and my deaf brother Solomon,
And from a large family that stands up for one another,
And from forgiveness and second chances.
I am from the rickety plane ride that I cannot remember, but that brought my family to Surrey, BC.
I am from "the streets, you can't touch me,"
And the school motto of Safe, Welcome and Responsible.
I am from Africa,
I am Aymen.

Residential Schools

Maya Carlsen *Clinton Elementary*

She arrived at a strange place,
 she was greeted with a cold face,
 but, she was nervous so she doesn't embrace.
 She wished for a good year,
 but, her parents weren't there,
 only some strangers were near.
 She felt scared,
 but, she could bare,
 because she was brave like a bear.
 She stepped inside,
 she got pushed aside,
 but, all she could do was abide.
 They cut her hair,
 but they did not care,
 that her memories were kept in there.
 She wore a uniform,
 she tried to inform,
 that those clothes were too itchy to be worn.
 She couldn't understand,
 but they took her hand,
 and they hurt her, to the point she could not stand.
 That night, she laid on her sheet,
 and cried herself to sleep,
 because there was no brave bear left in her.

Je Fuis

Eala Spooner *École Westridge Élémentaire*

La nuit tombe
 Je cours
 Mes jambs me font mal
 Pourquoi a vie est comme ça
 Je ne sais pas
 Depuis que je suis née
 Je fuis
 Les bombes
 Les hommes
 La guerre
 De la poussière vole dans l'air
 Un avion passe au dessus de ma tête
 Une bombe tombe
 Je n'ai plus besoin de fuir

My Heart Soars

Catherine Luo

Stoney Creek Community School

The beauty of the flowers,
 The softness of the breeze,
 The patterns on the tree bark,
 Speaks to me.
 The bright light of the sun,
 The shadows of the moon,
 The shimmer of the stars,
 Speaks to me.
 The sounds of creeks splashing,
 The rhythm of the sea,
 The coolness of the ocean,
 Speaks to me.
 The smell of morning grass,
 The pine sap on my finger,
 The singing of the birds,
 Speaks to me.
 The power of the thunder,
 The sweetness of berries,
 The trail of life,
 And the spirit that never goes away,
 They speak to me.
 And my heart soars.

Black Figures In The Sky

Zoe Serdar *Brentwood Park Elementary*

I wake, my eyes adjusting, my body slowly beginning to move. My prison is dank and opaque and I begin to feel like the walls are closing in, getting closer and closer. I hear shuffling and noises outside, and a little voice urges me to escape. I tentatively touch the prison then I begin to pound at the walls frantically. Soon after much laborious work, I find a weak spot and it yields as I kick at it. Light begins to spill in and I continue as the walls begin to crumble and fresh air fills my lungs. I cherish the gentle breeze and the smell of pine and leaves. At first, I can't see, but when my eyes begin to adjust and open then, I see towering structures that stand before me.

I turn and see prisons like mine. Others are also trying to escape, their arms and legs bulge out of their prison walls. I just watch pitifully as they thrash and kick. There is nowhere to go, unless falling to your death counts, so I just wait. Then I see a tall black figure... as she walks the black seems to turn purple, then green, and then blue, as if the color was being sucked into her...

A few weeks later

I step to the edge of what is the only thing that is keeping me from falling, the sheer drop makes me feel dizzy, but I feel ready, ready to take the leap. I'm called back to the group. Today she will teach us to fly! The others are arguing and fooling around like any other day and she calls for our attention and the others reluctantly obey. We watch as she spreads her arms and dives off the platform and glides gracefully through the air.

I watch in awe, and, when she returns she has brought food. Later, I step toward the edge of the platform once again, feeling a bit apprehensive, I gather all the courage I have and before I can deliberate my chances of success, I leap toward whatever is beyond. Wind pounds at my face, and the space between me and the ground is closing fast as I hurtle to my demise, so I quickly spread my arms.

Before I can accept that I am probably about to die, my decent begins to slow, and I begin to glide through the air. I feel exhilaration and rejoice as I begin to gain altitude and then fly upside down for fun. A part of me is screaming "This is amazing!!" and another, "Yay, you didn't go splat!"

I spend awhile flying, enjoying the sound of voices and the rush of being elevated upon nothing, but I soon return home and the others crowd around me and chatter about flying amidst the dogged bickering of others. I soon go to sleep, ready for my next flight.

I am the talkative flyer.

I am a Raven

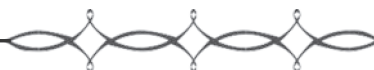
Path of the Gods

Lauren Maio *Kitchener Elementary*

It is an early summer morning, and fog fills the air, rising over cobblestoned roads and stone houses. The seatbelt still cold to the touch, catches skin with surprise. The sun slowly awakens, casting its rays through the car window. Heading down a narrow alleyway, the air feels heavy and damp. No one is in sight, but the lingering smell of horses fills the air. Sunflowers gently sway in the wind, and a breeze clears the pathway for the sun. Footprints emerge as feet meet the dusty pathway, creating small clouds of dust like the pounding of a chalk brush. An uneven strip of red, hand painted on the rocks, points the way.

The path begins to climb, slowly at first, then more quickly, like endless steps on a steep staircase. Past gorges and terraces, squeezing beside narrow rock faces, the pattern of footsteps becomes a song. The temperature rises, like a pot of boiling water. Searching for shade, water pours onto a desert-like tongue. Waves crash against rocks, sprinkling water over grass. The sun, shining like a stage light now, leaves beads of sweat on scorched skin. Stomachs growl like caged dragons, and legs begin to buckle from deep thirst.

Birds flap their wings and fluffy clouds drift slowly through the air. When the path ascends, it climbs into the clouds. Around the corner, and a small step over a rock, a startling find – the most beautiful, endless views of the Amalfi Coast. Boats, buses, houses, and cars fit perfectly around the coastline, as though someone had placed them there. Breathless, she imagines gods and goddesses of early times making the same journey, stopping to admire the sweeping views below. Her hair blows gently in the breeze. Everything goes quiet. The only thing heard is the whistling sound of the wind. At last, she speaks. "It's incredible."



Recovering from Darkness

Sevie Paz *Lyndhurst Elementary*

I was violently shaking with anguish as I lay on the grass. Clenching my fists, I wonder how I came to this. As I was pondering, I glanced over to see striking visions. I ambled over to a resplendent maple tree as golden leaves fell onto the ground. Calming down, the wind swirled around me. I smiled, realizing the true beauty of nature. The cotton candy clouds above soothed me. All of a sudden, there I was, standing and watching the fiery sunset glow. Fallen fragments were pieced together as I discovered the genuine splendor around me. I settled down into myself, composed. I take in the heavenly pine scent wafting through the cold crisp air. The stars align, and I see twinkling dainty lights that sparkle across the sky. Comprehending this, I cleanse myself in a waterfall of tears.

Freedom in Reach

Samantha Kelman *Brentwood Park Elementary*

Iron bars and claustrophobic walls greeted me as my eyes were awoken by a searing bright light.

I shook my head and let my eyes adjust to this new environment. A moment or two passed before I noticed something weighing down my neck. I couldn't bend my head down, so I looked at the reflective wall. A black collar studded with sharp spikes looped around my neck tightly, and a chain trailed down from it, rusted and covered with dirt and mud.

A flashback: human hunters calling out to one another and a sharp needle thing sticking out of my fur. The hunters had a fox emblem with an arrow stuck in the head on their pale white skin. I tried to stand up but unsuccessfully flopped back down.

Suddenly a human came over and glared at me with hatred. It forcefully dragged me out of the box, I woke up and fell hard onto the ground. I tried to stand up but was unsuccessful. I was forced onto the ground with the long chain the human held on my collar. I was pulled across the floor into a larger circular cage, and around that cage, loud screaming humans, so loud the floor rumbled with the vibration of it. Beyond that? A colorful flappy wall in which air spilled in from it. A tent.

The human whom dragged me into the cage took off my collar, then leaped back. I noticed bite marks on its arm. A few other humans came in, shoving in front of them a smaller, younger one that held a leathery whip. The older humans pointed towards me, baring their teeth and speaking in a foreign language. The younger one seemed extremely nervous and timid. As though it didn't want to do this, it shook its head and the other ones slapped it. Out of its terror I was whipped with the long black vine. Humans around me roared their approval. I was whipped again, twice, once more until I finally locked eyes with the young human, it had startling blue eyes and tears streaming down its face. While being whipped I was cornered into the edge of the cage. The smell of pine and dirt blew past my face.

An older human screamed louder than the rest, the young one with the whip yelled something back, and took out a wicked knife, I closed my eyes in resignation. Until I heard a clatter, and a large ripping noise - I opened my eyes and saw pine trees awaiting me. The young human had opened the cage and cut the flapping colorful wall. I was really close to freedom.

Without hesitation, I dashed through, paws flying in the air. But before I disappeared into the safety of the outside forest I took one last look at the human. Who was now being whipped, though crying from the pain it looked at me and smiled - I flicked my tail, winked, and ran.



Estuary: Where the river meets the Sea

Joli Lam *Lakeview Elementary*

After being away for a long time to pursue an education and career in a big city, I yearned for the peace and sanctuary of my old home in a neighborhood by a river that leads to an estuary. Like the salmon, I have journeyed from the river to the sea and now I have returned to where it all started.

While growing up, my parents had very high expectations of me. They enrolled me in many after school lessons. I felt a lot of pressure. I yearned for a place where I could relax, and on one fateful day, I had found it.

On one sunny summer day during high school, I sneaked out to take a walk to the river. I followed the flow of the river. Along the way, I danced on large rocks and listened to the vicious river rapids. I never kept in mind that the river ended, until I noticed the trees were starting to clear, and the rough gravel on the ground was transitioning to silky sand. I had landed myself at an estuary.

As I stood on a rock marveling the ocean's beauty, a girl my age collided into me like the fresh water colliding into salt water. Rather than getting angry, we burst into laughter. She started to lift rocks. Puzzled, I asked, "are you searching for crabs?" The girl looked up at me and replied, "I'm looking for sea glass." "Sea glass are gorgeous!" I exclaimed. She smiled and invited me to join her search the next day. "I'll see you tomorrow, and my name is Avery." She waved, "I'm Naomi. See you soon!" I replied smiling.

The next day I scurried out of school and made my way straight to the estuary. Avery was there waiting for me. Together, we searched for hours and found two blue stones. She then made two necklaces out of the sea glass we found.

For the rest of that summer, I would sneak out to the estuary every chance I got. Avery would always be sitting on a rock, waiting.

Even though Avery and I were very connected, our lives, like water from the river must enter the estuary and flow out to the sea. I had to start college soon and Avery was going to volunteer for charities and school.

On the last day we met up, Avery and I threw our necklaces into the estuary to symbolize where our friendship started and where it will end. We went our separate ways.

Memories of this friendship propelled me to take a stroll to the estuary. The water levels were low, and the water flow was soft. I dipped my feet into the estuary. The feel of icy cold water brushing against my feet felt nostalgic to the times Avery and I would splash around in the water. I sat under the sun with my feet in the water, and my eyes gazing at the water ripples. However, I diverted my focus onto a shiny object reflecting on the sun's golden rays. I reached down into the water and to my surprise, I pulled up the two necklaces of sea glass Avery made, tangled together. My heart ached, and at that moment I knew I wanted to see Avery again, like the river meets the Sea.



Un jour dans la vie d'un dé

Alicia Zhou *École Brantford Élémentaire*

Bonjour! Je m'appelle Six et je suis un dé à six côtés. Mon vrai nom est 6482, c'est-à-dire six mille quatre cent quatre-vingt-deux, mais je préfère le nom Six. Tu vois, chacun de nous avons un nom dépendant de combien de côtés nous avons. Après, trois autres dés vont venir et ils vont se rouler pour voir c'est quoi ton nom complète. Ils utilisent ces nombres pour déterminer ton nom, comme le mien! Mon meilleur ami est Sept. Il a sept côtés, comme tu as probablement deviné et il est la couleur bleue. Nous faisons tous ensemble, comme rouler ensemble et cacher ensemble. Par exemple, quand le professeur nous amène dans la salle de classe, on met de la colle entre nous pour que le prof ne peut pas nous séparer (sauf si tu comptes le temps où il a mis de l'eau sur nous pour nous séparer, ce n'était vraiment pas gentil). De plus, à la fin de la période, quand les élèves nous rangeons, on se cache alors les élèves ne peuvent pas nous trouver. Mais à la fin, il y a toujours un élève qui nous trouve. Ma chose préférée de ma vie est quand les élèves jouent les jeux de sociétés avec nous. J'adore ma vie comme un dé!

My Life as an Eraser

Noah Lee *Brantford Elementary*

Ever since I was created, I was always hoping for a good life. Sadly, this did not turn out the way it should have. I was stuffed in boxes, crammed into desks, thrown onto the floor, and abused in any way possible. Let me tell you the whole story of it all.

The truck that held the school supplies, including me, was shipped off down a long road towards the store Staples. I was so excited, I could hardly control myself. Finally, we were at our destination. I looked around in awe at the sight of the massive building. Millions of different school supplies lay in there, with everything like sticky notes to different coloured pencils. The truck driver took the pencil box and brought it into the store, with a stagger in his step because the box was so heavy. Then the box was dumped into a separate box compartment, and a waterfall of pencils came out. The truck driver did this for five more boxes of school supplies, then he started at the erasers. The box became shaky as he lifted us into the air, and with thundering steps like running over continuous speed bumps, we were poured into the box. The impact of me hitting the metal box was not a pleasant feeling. Finally, the pain stopped. Panting, I looked out the bars of the box. The truck driver that delivered us was driving away now, probably to pick up another batch of supplies.

For years, I watched my fellow erasers get picked up by curious children or adults, and every time a human came by, I would always try to look the best out of all the erasers. But I guess I got my hopes up. Every time people picked me up, I would be examined by parents, who said that they could probably find a cleaner eraser than me. Heartbroken, I was put back all the way to the bottom of the box. Finally, a few hours later that day, a twelve year old boy came, dug me out of the metal box, and into his warm, clammy hand. He purchased me, then brought me to school, where I was used. At first it was a lot of fun because I got to see different things in a classroom that my fellow erasers didn't get to see. But then the first time I was used, it was like running my head into concrete over and over. Shaving my head off and bits of lead smudged on me was the worst feeling in my life! I didn't think I could handle much more of this, then suddenly I was knocked off the desk, rolled on the floor and skidded under the cabinet. I lay there until this very day, watching new grade sevens come and go, just wanting to be picked up one – last – time.

Ode to the cello

Kaviya Sriragu *Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

From an oak tree
 Cut down
 Then carved and sanded
 Painted a rich brown
 Strings are then added
 The bow is made
 With fine hair similar to gold
 It is played against the strings
 Using a strong handhold
 It has the curves of a rainbow
 Strings as long as a river
 It is challenging to play
 Similar to wearing a blindfold
 You can never see
 Because it is huge
 It is like riding a wild stallion
 Only some can play it
 It kicks and lands on your feet
 As the rosin gets everywhere
 But you still keep trying
 After many years of practice
 You finally find the perfect place to hold your bow
 It glides like a lone dove
 Flying across a field of white cottons
 And it creates a majestic sound
 A sound you have never heard before
 You forget everything once you hear
 Because it feels like a calm night sky
 Like a new beginning
 But then you get to the fingerings
 They are complicated and painful
 And the only song you can play is Canon in D
 You play the same eight notes over and over again
 like a broken record machine
 Until you feel your hand will fall off
 But then the conductor points to you
 And you play the final chord
 As you take a deep breath,
 Letting your fingers glide across the strings,
 And stop to the silence, waiting for the audience to
 come out of their trance,
 And applaud.

Conquering

Lindsay Goudron *Burnaby Central Secondary*

Sullen yet glorious.
 The intense piercing glow of the sun,
 sparkling on the tranquil surface of the water.
 Thin sheets of ice,
 as clear as a diamond
 shattered into millions of irremediable shards
 with each step.
 The gentle chirps
 of the last southern bound birds
 carried in the brisk wind.
 A crystal coating of frost
 covering the once prestigious leaves
 now drowning out their presences.
 The welcoming of winter,
 conquering what came before it.

Lullaby

Melanie Li *Burnaby Central Secondary*

Unable to fall asleep
 I face the blank ceiling,
 closed my eyes
 and listened to the lullaby,
 The footsteps
 soft against the frosted road
 created a pattern with each
 step,
 The wind rustling through the
 evergreen trees in the moonlight seem
 like they are singing a calming song in my mind,
 gentle and soothing...
 The echoing creaks from the heaters downstairs
 to the closet upstairs
 ring through the room like calming bells,
 Drifting off into a comfortable slumber
 the lullaby of the night plays on
 while I adventure into a different
 world.

Who am I?

Cassandra Ogalino

Byrne Creek Community School

I wrinkle skin,
 Turn bones to dust
 It is my job to destroy and create
 Some say I'm a thief
 But instead I like to say I work alongside destiny
 I only take what's meant to be taken,
 Not for my own selfish reasons
 Sometimes I am inconveniently long and tedious
 Sometimes I am quicker than you'd expect
 Though you despise me,
 You need me more than you think you do
 I'm taken for granted
 Though, there will come a day when you realize
 I run faster and you can't keep up
 I only move forward
 And I take no one with me
 You assume I have no mercy
 But I do not work in favor of you nor do I deviously
 scheme against you
 I have the power to heal, but that's up to you
 Small things only
 Sidewalk scrapes, a fractured ankle, broken hearts
 Some people think I am nothing more but a made-up
 concept, an illusion, a fraud
 Others think I'm a fundamental force, a factor of
 history
 I am too complex for your little minds to comprehend
 Ironically so, I am used to simplify things
 A reason to explain why everything goes forward, one
 at a time
 Instead of all at once
 I tell you when the sun will set, how many hours there
 are in a day,
 So you don't have to worry when the sun will show
 itself again
 Sadly, a new day is no longer a thrill
 I pass before you as you contemplate these words
 I was the past, now the present, soon I to be the
 future
 I am a mystery
 I might not exist
 I am time
 I can be brutal, but believe me when I say,
 I keep things interesting in this mundane world

Les Réseaux Sociaux

Hana Chui *École Moscrop Secondaire*

Au présent nous sommes au milieu
 D'une obsession bouleversante
 Tellement de nouveautés merveilleuses
 C'est une bouffée rafraîchissante
 Voulez-vous une saveur étrangère?
 Observez tout l'univers,
 Sentez l'air d'une autre mer
 Même à l'autre bout de la terre,
 caresser quelqu'un proche et cher
 Comment le faire qu'avec les sites modernes,
 Des fontaines de médias spectaculaires
 Les réseaux sociaux finalement, merci
 Vieux ou petit, tout le monde les utilise
 Dans la société d'aujourd'hui
 Être unique, c'est toi l'ennui
 Est-ce que les photos sont tout ce qu'on vaut?
 C'est tout nouveau, les réseaux sociaux
 Mais beaucoup de cela est faux
 Tout beau, mais ils seraient ils notre tombeau?
 Pensez encore à ce que vous avez lu
 Tout ce que vous avez senti et entendu
 Publicités, horreurs et mensonges qu'on a cru
 Mais encore nous les ignorons, pas sourds, mais
 têtus.

A tide pool of life

Clare Logan *Burnaby Central Secondary*

A landscape of dark storm clouds loom above my head

The smell of the salty sea reaches my nose

I stagger across the uneven rocky beach

The ocean is a roaring lion in my ears as the waves dance through the rocks

I come across a small patch of life

A tide pool

I peer in, seeing my reflection, a pale grey face
But there is so much more, so much beyond that

Fish the size of my thumb

Their backs a colourful painting of red and green

They bolt from rock to rock

Leaving a rippling trail in the water

Crabs, almost invisible in the dark water

Hiding in the comfort of their shells, their safe homes

A single starfish lies on the outside of the tide pool
Is it lonely like I am?

Its light purple skin looks as smooth as a mirrored lake

I reach out to touch it, my fingers outstretched

A drumbeat of thunder follows a severe strike of lightning

Before I know it I am running back across the ragged beach

Back

Back to where I came from

Painting Outside The Lines

Melanie Li *Burnaby Central Secondary*

As the sun falls down a series of
flashbacks played through my head,
reminiscing about how I painted colourful sunsets
at the age of eight,

How the colours splashed together,
how the birds soared across the pages,
and how everything was a beautiful mess,

At the age of five I drew things differing
from small things like red roses
to the tallest mountains,
then I started thinking more deeply,

How each painting was different unlike any
others,
how the paint would get outside the lines,
and how no one knew what the picture was
except me as if it was a code,

It felt like only yesterday
I explored the vast canvas with the
same old paint brush,
but now I walk the sidewalks with responsibilities
around every corner.

Cyanide Seeds

Emily Ma *Alpha Secondary*

There are rows of apples, veiny and red, waxing
and waning under grocery-store lights
Rows of migrant workers, dizzy in the beating
sun, bodies stretched into question marks
Dig a little deeper and see for yourself--
Digging for 50-cent deals,
Discarding the bruised, the blemished, the not-
good-enough;
Discarding the foreign, the labourers,
Good enough to pick your apples but
Not good enough to be Canadian.

Subsidize this!

The clean slice of the knife, dipping into the crisp
white flesh,
Thick red peels running between the molars
Working its way down the esophagus--
Trying to turn the ugly truth into something more
Digestible

We use migrant workers until they grow
inconvenient.
Bury their remains
In our backyards - they help our gardens grow.
Invisible deaths:
Omar Graham, Sheldon McKenzie, Ned
Livingston Peart, Andres Dominguez Moran.

Don't worry they say, it's a chemical, but it's
harmless.
Chlorpyrifos, diphenylamine;
Everybody keeps their mouths shut.
They can be shirt-shined, green-yellow-red,
Baked in all-American pie.
7-dollar-sweat sliding down your throat
70-hour-weeks of work wrapped up in crisp red
offerings
Fingers lined and weathered, raw and skinned,
Showing a lifetime of labour
It's a stinging sweetness, the locally-grown
processed truths
Look at the apples, shiny and round
Look at the workers, bruised and brown

They are disposable,
Used until the expiration date of their
Two-dimensional faceless labour;
The bad apples of the bunch, the throwaways
Give the undesirable jobs to the undesirable
people--
Government-issued exploitation
That's too hard for us to
Stomach
You don't know what you're biting
Into
The heavy crunch, the sweet juice of
pesticides, the blood running down knuckles,
Sweat and suffocation in greenhouse gases.
Can you feel the chunks of flesh stuck in your
teeth? Rotten to the core, and
It's hard to get rid of the aftertaste, rising up
Your throat.
Whose labour are you eating?
Biting down until the bitter core
Of cyanide seeds
Poisoning you from the
Inside
Out

Jeanne d'Arc

Annika Jang *École Burnaby North Secondaire*

Une guerrière
Courageuse et héroïque
Combattre, conquérir, et inspirer
Elle a combattu et elle a gagné contre l'armée
britannique
Défendre, capturer, et envahir
Intelligente et déterminée
Une grande influence

Cherry Pie

Negar Shaban *Moscrop Secondary*

The reflection of the tiny girl in the pink bow,
 flowing sundress as white as the snow
 Mommy made braids as perfect as sunny days
 Fruit punch and cherry pies
 Hazel eyes overflowing with rivers of rapture
 Her kiss on my cheek
 "I love you"

The frantic girl with crooked teeth
 Bright yellow backpack packed tightly with
 dreams
 The scent of fresh paper, unopened books
 Chapters upon chapters waiting to be explored
 PB and J sandwiches with no crust
 Her kiss on my cheek
 "I love you"

Old sneakers and the stench of filthy lockers
 The obnoxious and never-ending ringing of bells
 Rushed footsteps in huddled hallways
 Heavy metal bursting from the small messy
 room
 Wails of worry, a restless mother
 Growls of protest, a careless daughter
 Furious stomps followed by cries
 Broken hearts caused by lies
 Closed doors that never open
 "I still love you"

Perfectly ironed grey suits and ties
 The serenity of morning coffee
 frustration of getting stuck in traffic
 The bland taste of frozen foods
 The stress of arriving late to work
 Drowning in guilt from ignoring calls from home
 Forgetting the feeling of her kiss on my cheeks
 "I love you, call me if you have time. I miss you."

Pulling out the nicest black dress from the end
 of the closet
 Every tear bottled up, letting the melancholy
 take over
 Making way towards the stone at a mournful
 pace
 Placing the cherry pie on the ground, the
 sweetness and warmth fills the atmosphere
 Missing the feeling of her kiss on my cheeks
 "I love you too"

Fantasy

Jessica Park *Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

Chrysanthemums speckled the floor
 Their golden petals floating
 Among the bright wine
 That she had spilled

They kept growing, despite
 The desperate hands
 That tore them apart
 Until they bled- and yet
 As the blood coated them
 The yellow flowers still
 Kept growing

She welcomed them
 And left the red roses to die alone
 The roses did not die, either
 But it would have been best if they had.

Can Dreams Die?

Andrew Chen *Burnaby South Secondary*

I used to wonder
 endlessly, about the possibilities
 of life.
 The singularity of hope within a
 grasping distance - a breath away.
 The endless winds of dreams
 whispering into my youthful heart.
 I imagine myself,
 standing at a realm of solitary bliss
 ignorant to the fading chants of humanity,
 like a turtle retreating inside it's barren shell
 to savor the silence of the breezy air -
 I believed.



Life is Not a Fairy Tale

Chloe Emes *Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

Life is not a fairy tale,
 Perfection, happily ever after, just an illusion
 A fairy tale is like looking at
 A model on the cover of a magazine;
 Not real,
 But edited and filtered until the end result is
 flawless,
 But not real
 Real life is a bumpy road
 With stretches of smooth,
 Or a roller coaster that never ends,
 Or a maze, with mysteries around each bend,
 But with no way out
 Perfection is simply a lens we can put over things,
 But we can't be perfect;
 Still, that doesn't mean we can't find happiness
 We can try to replicate the lives of others,
 But it will never be the same
 So why not carve out our own paths?
 Follow our hearts
 Things may get messy
 We may get broken,
 But happiness is waiting for all of us,
 No matter how we get there

Crocodile Tears

Annette Scott *Cariboo Hill Secondary*

by the skirt of moonlight,
 we colonize the bitter wind
 that bites at bare skin
 as though exchanging moments
 is as easy as playing cards
 holding hands
 with fists of red paint
 when I told you of the drunk in my living room
 you didn't sing,
 you bellowed the harmony of a hollow
 sympathy,
 an 8 o'clock 9 o'clock deadline
 of fleeting heartfelts.
 so please, continue to blare the birdsong
 of your sickly solicitude,
 your crocodile tears are showing.

Mentality

Emily Gaythorpe

Burnaby Mountain Secondary

Somehow you return without the slightest warning
 You linger in the air one morning
 Back so simply
 I cannot control you
 Disbelief washes over me
 Gone for mere seconds
 It felt like a breath of fresh air
 Now I'm not sure how to breathe
 You've made yourself right at home
 And yet I'm feeling so alone
 I now put on an act
 The show
 The opera
 The scene
 All in the genre of
 Pretending you're not sleeping in the same bed as
 me

Everyone Has a Part

(reversal poem)

William Li *Burnaby North Secondary*

I am an **outcast**, unable to contribute to society
 And I refuse to believe that
 I can make a **difference**
 I realize this may come as a shock, but
 I can **empower** change in the world
 Is a lie, and
 I'm just a **useless nobody**
 In 30 years, I will tell my children that
 I have my priorities straight because
Money
 Is more important than
Family
 I tell you this:
 Once upon a time
 There was no need for battles and wars,
 But this will not be true in my era
 Everyone is **hell-bent** on more, always wanting
 more
 Experts tell me
 There will be no peace
 I do not agree that
 I can make a **difference** in the world
 It is safe to say that
 Everyone just cares about themselves
 I do not conclude that
 People will **change** for the better
 In the future
 There will be no planet to call **home**
 I do not agree with the people that say
 Humanity can work together
 It will become clear that
Selfishness is more common than generosity
 No longer can it be said that
 A healthy planet to live on is **worth more** than
 money
 It is evident,
 That no one cares about our little blue marble
 hanging in space
 It is foolish to presume that
 Society is **advancing** forward.

Perfect

Lindsay Hofmann*Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

glance at the black framed mirror
 rays of light swiftly striking
 the glass
 ideal images reflecting
 captivating
 the warm smiles from others
 motivate you
 they see your best
 perfect.
 nothing is wrong
 twenty-twenty vision
 and everything is a blur
 light reflecting those ideal images
 no one wants to see
 perfect? me?
 shattered fragments
 potent cries
 these are lullabies
 sweet melodies of togetherness
 only sung in an abyss of solitude
 shrieking sounds stand tall
 present constantly
 nothing can ever be heard
 silence
 smiling in the black framed mirror
 a beautiful day
 luscious sun rays
 beam down on my face
 temporary tears permanently
 will not wash away
 perfect every day



Mathematics

Sophia Pallister *Burnaby North Secondary*

I am more than the sum of my parts
 I am the sum of my parts
 Multiplied by the cores of dying stars
 Divided by the cries of broken hearts
 Searching for the square root of eternity
 And pondering the factors and multiples in every
 wondering child's eye

I am but one variable in the grand polynomial
 Of life, the universe, and everything
 Searching for the truth
 Can you solve for x ?

I am a fraction of a decimal of a
 One hundred percent chance that
 We're not going to live through this
 If we don't live through it together

I am the circumference of the centre of
 The dying world we're living on
 And the area
 Of how much of it we've killed

I am the 3.14 of fate
 Twisting on without pattern or reason
 Carrying us on its back
 Towards a future we can't see

There's something comforting about
 How everything is temporary
 Because change is the one thing
 That won't change

So simply keep following
 The formulas and rhythms
 As days add into years
 Into decades
 Into centuries
 Into eons
 And never forget

You have a place in this irrational number.
 You are more than the sum of your parts.

Bus Stop

Eugenie Song *Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

December in the Pouring rain,
 A girl beneath a red umbrella,
 Too small to cover
 The icy chill and pain.
 Eyes staring at the horizon line,
 The bus should come at any moment,
 It should come this time.
 It would appear over the horizon
 And rescue her from the chills of the seasons.
 The skies were growing dark,
 Darker by the minute,
 Threatening to chain her to the bus stop.
 With looming clouds blocking any rays of sun.
 With rain pouring by the ton
 On her little red umbrella.
 The only spark of colour,
 As the rest of the world dissolved
 Into the monochrome hue of twilight.
 The girl kept waiting.
 Holding on tight,
 Yet the rain kept falling.
 The bus never came.

The Sands of Time

Ida Khanlou *Alpha Secondary*

the sands of time, leaping through the narrow spout
 as the swaddled souls sleep silently
 as the blossoms begin to bloom
 in the nursery, the garden of
 endless possibilities
 but as the flowers begin to wilt
 and the elderly take their
 last breath, the world falls silent
 until the piercing cries of a newborn restart the clock

La réalité

Maya Cowpar-Mark *École Moscrop Secondaire*

C'était là quand je l'ai vu,
Mes yeux son éclairés.

Je savais que je tombais amoureuse...

Mon coeur met à se battre plus fort,
Tout mon corps commence à se réchauffer.

Je sens la nervoisté qui m'attague...

Notre future defile sous mes yeux,
Mes rêves deviennent une réalité.

Plusieurs nuits restent éveillérs
Avec plein de pensées.

Ses pensées joyeuses ou tristes,

Emprisonnées dans ma tête.

Je tombais follement amoureuse,
Sans pensées des consequences.

Une larme coule sur ma joue,

Lorsque je pense à lui.

Je continue de penser à ses yeux et comment ils m'attirent...
Tous les temps heureux,

Les rires qu'on partage,

Mais le sentiment disparaît,

Les rêves de notre future commencent à se fondre,
Je me demande comment ceci deviant la réalité?
Le lien qu'on avait n'est plus là,

Je realise que c' était temporaire.

Désirant que ceci n'était pas la réalité.



Scuirophobia

Alexei Villareal *Byrne Creek Community School*

When I was younger, I recall being at Central Park on a crisp, autumn morning. The clouds looked ready to brew up a storm and drench Burnaby with its familiar rain. There were children playing on the colourful equipment, their cheeks a rosy pink due to the nippy air. Most parents kept a watchful eye on them, the others didn't even notice that their kids were scrambling up trees.

After getting sick of swinging on the monkey bars, I decided to stray away from the playground, escaping my dad's supervision. I wandered away, exploring the wonders of nature and observing all the shades of autumn. All around me, leaves of red, brown and yellow twisted and fluttered until they landed softly onto the earth. The frigid air left my hands feeling like ice but it was no stranger to me.

Out of nowhere, a fat grey squirrel popped out began to scamper around me. Probably scavenging for food, it rustled through the crunchy leaves in search of it. Its beady black eyes paid close attention to my movements, as if it was staring into my soul.

Frightened, I picked up a nearby twig and with all the strength I had in my scrawny arm, I hurled the stick at the woodland creature.

If only I knew how vicious Central Park squirrels could be. If I did, I never would have thrown that twig. Although I missed, it provoked the squirrel nonetheless.

It chased me and I tried to run as fast as my tiny legs could take me. Frankly, I had no idea where I was going. After running for quite some time, I tripped. The squirrel had stopped running after me moments prior.

Shocked, I cried hysterically. I didn't know where I was anymore. All I knew was that daddy was nowhere close and I was as scared as someone walking alone on the streets during the unholy hours of night. My screams came from a place of terror, I was lost in absolute fear. I bruised my knee. My clothes were wet and stained with mud; I absolutely hated wet clothes.

Some moments later, I felt it, the movement of my body, the feeling of my feet leaving the ground and into the safety of my father's arms who didn't let me go until we got home.

Since that encounter with the squirrel, I've avoided them tirelessly out of fear. And don't you try to tell me that they're more scared of me than I'm scared of them because squirrels don't bolt the second they see me.

I cannot emphasize my fear of squirrels enough, if walking the longer way means I won't run into one, I'll take that path. When I walk home and one is perched atop my doorstep, I'll call whoever's at home and ask them to scare it off, or if no one's home, I wait for it to leave.

Squirrels are the devil spawn of Mother Nature and you can't convince me otherwise.



The Apple

Alexei Villareal *Byrne Creek Community School*

An apple ruled all of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth realms.

It was an unexpected thing; the incapacitation of Queen Elizabeth II who then entrusted the whole matter to a simple apple.

The Apple Regent, who resided in Brogdale Farm, humbly accepted the responsibility. The other apples, the trees, and the farmers bowed down to their new temporary ruler.

Citizens from all over England would come to visit the orchard and pay their respects. On a live televised program, Prime Minister Theresa May told the world, "This is the orchard where the Apple who rules the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth grows on a simple branch." The people would observe the traditional forms of greeting, men bowed from the neck whilst women did a small curtsy.

During weekly audiences, the Prime Minister, Theresa May would come to the orchard and sit with the Apple to discuss political and worldly affairs while the Apple retained its constitutional right to "advise, encourage and warn."

When the time came for the Apple to be picked, none of the farmers would do it, Parliament refused to allow it. The other apples swore that they would oxidize if such an event were to occur. But the Apple who ruled all of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth said, "No, my friends; it is time."

Finally, Her Majesty had returned. She went to the orchard and ordered one of the many equerries in her entourage to climb up a ladder and pick the Apple. The Queen thanked the Apple for its service, and the Apple thanked the Queen for the humble opportunity.

They say that when the Apple appeared in the marketplace, it was the shiniest and roundest apple the world had ever seen. Soon, apples had become a fad. Everyone who ate an apple of any kind experienced a catharsis.

I bought the Apple who ruled the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth for 0.58 pounds at Tesco yesterday, and for an entire day, it sat in my fruit basket and taught me the right way to drink tea. The Apple recommended Assam and Earl Grey made with tea leaves in a teapot and poured into a fine china cup. "You must hold the cup without your pinky," the Apple advised me. But, today, it told me, "it is time," so I baked the Apple into an apple crumble and ate it.

Now, The Queen rules the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth Realms once again.



Blizzard

Hugo Zhou *Burnaby North Secondary*

I remember myself lying in the freezing snow, with the only sound being my heavy breathing. Endless snow and several scattered pines surrounded me. Blood trickled down my nose, dripping onto the snow, painting it red. There was no one around me. I was alone.

Earlier, I was standing in my skis at the peak of Mountain Seymour, gazing down at the expanse of civilization. It was as though I was at the top of the world. The sun light shone brightly on the snow, creating an inviting glow on the slope. I accelerated down the calm slope, like sinking down soft cream. Cool wind blew past me as I sped up. I was anticipating the ultimate challenge: the Devil's Drop. It is a double black diamond run, which was something I have never completed without crashing painfully to the bottom.

Finally, I came up to the top of the daunting slope slanting almost vertically down. Hard rocks were visible in some parts of the slope, adding thrill to the adventure. Icy wind picked up, impelling the clouds to hide the sun. I placed my goggles over my eyes. Adrenaline rushed through my body; I could hear my heart hammering in my chest. I leaned forward, and dropped.

I found my skis turning hard, unable to stop the increasing speed of descent. Still, it was a huge leap from my skill set from before. Halfway down, I started getting the techniques. Feeling excitement, I continued downwards. Suddenly, without realizing what was happening, I tripped forward.

I remember myself free-falling through the air, every muscle of my body tense, waiting for the imminent doom. A pang of pain cascaded like an ocean wave down my body. Blood ran from my nose onto the pure, white snow. I couldn't move, let alone stop the tears welling up my eyes. My thoughts screamed the word "why!" Why can some people accomplish great things with ease, while others struggle to even find true meaning in life?

A deluge of memories flowed in. In grade four, I came to Canada as a sad, lonely nobody. Determination lifted me out of the past. Since then I have always been trying my hardest, not giving up.

Ignoring the pain, I pinched my nose to stop the bleeding and staggered up.

Just then another man skied down with ease and asked me, "do you need help?"

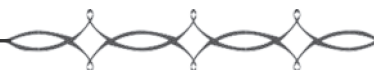
"No, thank you" I answered firmly.

"Alright. What were you trying to accomplish there?" He looked at me from head to toe.

"I'm fighting the blizzard," I replied curtly.

"No pain, no gain, ay?"

"Yeah." I understood what he meant.



Nobody Likes You

Emilie Paco *Burnaby South Secondary*

Nobody likes her.

You know her, everybody knows her.

Nobody likes her.

You see her at school, shuffling with the crowd in her dusty Adidas Superstars. They're bleak and colourless; like a sheep, matching her individuality. The soles are worn down with self-consciousness and shame. Anxiously gripping onto the sleeves of one of her six Champion hoodies; each one a different shade of grey, and pilling with decay, just like her personality. Struggling to keep up, to fit into the utterly unexceptional, mainstream mold of brain-washed approval.

Clawing and scrounging her way into any group, clique, or important crowd. Scavenging for any acknowledgment, or meaning. Yet they pay her not the slightest care. Pushed aside, ignored, discarded. Her presence to them is that of a piece of dandruff that you have to flick off and get on with your day. Her voice is the faint whisper of a ghost, blending in with the lockers- washed out and putrid grey. She might as well be off at a distant planet, two thousand light years away.

The sheer residence of hatred for her devours you.

You never knew where it came from, but it downpours like a hurricane, and there is nothing you can do to stop the rain. Her footsteps are nothing but an echo through the halls, but the materiality of her presence plummets down on you, like the weight of a thousand bricks. Glumly roaming around with her shoulders slumped, rotting and dripping with pure annoyance; leaving behind a thick stench of self-pity and neediness.

She sits in front of you in class. You focus on her wilted, mousey brown hair. Illuminated by the frizz, the split ends sway back and forth like a thousand little pendulums slowly driving you to madness.

She follows you in the halls. You try to ignore her. Shut out the images of her desperate, attention-obsessed lingering. You can't get rid of it. You close your eyes, but you can still see her, creeping like a tailgating car in the rear view mirror of your mind. The thought of having to associate with her makes you sick. You cannot stand the thought of behaving civilly within the vicinity of this vial being. The sound of her flat footsteps chipping away at the ground, closing the space between you, pokes into you from behind, like a needle. Threading your skin, you feel the complete revulsion coursing through your veins. You escape to the nearest washroom, grasping the greasy metal handle in desperation.

Why do you despise her so much?

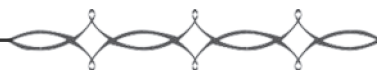
You glance in the mirror, and in complete pathetic, wretched, veracity,

She reflects back.

You are her.

The searing pain of realization pierces through the devastatingly truthful smudged glass:

Nobody likes you.



A Search Within Itself

Jennifer Yen *Burnaby North Secondary*

Elizabeth has always been searching and searching: for true accomplishments; recognition in her crafts; fulfillment in the people around her. Performance has become an innate part of Elizabeth's life. From the first time she stepped on stage in the spotlight, she knew it was a passion to keep.

Those around her said she was "lucky" enough to turn it into a career. It was true; seventeen and short on money, she started street performing as a clown, and surrounding her ever since was the familiar scent of makeup. Elizabeth just had to play her role through the gleaming mask that hid her ashamed feelings and her non-existent self-confidence. She entertained with funny gestures and remarks, as the audience laughed hysterically in response, but her smile was but a shell; she never felt happy, and still lived off coins from the red solo cup she set out every day.

"Hey!" A little girl approached her and tried to pronounce her "h's" to the best of her abilities.

Elizabeth was a bit startled and did an animated jump. She tried her hardest to stay in character.

"It'll be an awesome performance if you did it without the makeup." She pleaded while examining the poodle Elizabeth had shaped with a balloon.

Shocked by the little girl's remarks, Elizabeth was as still as a statue, she even struggled to voice herself.

"I'll come back tomorrow." She waved goodbye.

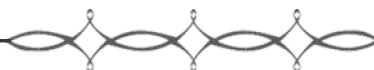
"W-wait!" Elizabeth turned back in a hurry, but then remembered she was still disguised as a clown, only to be viewed as a joke by the rest of the audience.

It was ironic. Her fear of performing with a bare face in front of a crowd, was as absurd as a pilot fearing heights. The little girl's words crossed her mind, but she continued to put on the mask the following day. Throughout the day, she scanned through the audience in hopes that she would see the pigtail braids and the smile that belonged to the little girl. Elizabeth's shirt was striped and looked as if she had just broken out of jail. She felt like an inmate that waited on a letter from home that will rekindle her relationship with herself.

Suddenly, the little girl appeared in front of her.

"To be honest, today's performance felt different. As if I really could see how you felt, behind the mask, duh." The little girl teased then dragged her mother over.

The women held a warm, take-out Chinese food box and offered it to Elizabeth. It **was** the letter Elizabeth had always anticipated for. Elizabeth ended her meal on the park bench with a fortune cookie, its crooked paper reading "Now is the time you try something new." She was determined to break through the barriers she had constructed and rekindle the relationships she once had with herself. Her encounter with the little girl taught Elizabeth that the search for fulfillment in others begins with finding it in herself.



Golden Veil

Anika Kuban *Burnaby South Secondary*

I crept through the golden hallway. Queen Victoria was right around the corner, and if Fannie's information was correct, she'd be dead within minutes.

"*Eleanor!*" hissed someone behind me. I whipped around, slipping my hidden knife into my hand. My sister, Elsie, raised her hands as if surrendering.

"Elsie! What are you doing here?"

"I wanted to see you in case... in case something goes wrong."

I sighed quietly. "I love you Elsie, but you can't be seen here." She nodded and silently raced back down the hall.

I turned my head, trying to peer into the Queen's bedchamber. She was expecting her ladies-in-waiting to help her get ready, but little did she know, Fannie had told them to wait until 10:30 instead of 10:00.

I looked at the ornate golden clock on the wall; 10:12. I had 18 minutes. The empty hallway loomed around me, weak sunlight filtering through stained glass windows. I slipped my knife into my boot, then slid around the corner into the Queen's bedchamber and crawled behind the bed.

On three, I told myself.

One.

Two.

Three.

I lunged at Queen Victoria, and in a flash, she was pinned under her heavy blankets. I waited until her gasping breaths were silent, then listened for any sounds. She was dead.

After carefully hiding the body under the elegant bed, I quickly opened the drawer of her vanity and frantically rummaged around before finding what I was looking for: a thick golden veil.

The gem-encrusted clock on the vanity said 10:27. Three minutes until the ladies-in-waiting came in.

I hastily covered my face with the golden veil, then adjusted my nightgown and hid my boots and dagger among the many gowns in the walk-in closet. I made sure my hair was slightly ruffled, as if I had just woken up, then quickly crawled into the bed.

When the ladies-in-waiting came in, they busied themselves getting me ready. I insisted they leave my heavy veil on, and Fannie reassured them when they seemed suspicious about my identity.

"Her Majesty is just feeling a bit under the weather," she told them.

One of the ladies smiled, then said, "I was worried Her Majesty had been replaced by that assassin! Eleanor Harris, I believe was her name?"

I coughed daintily to hide the stiffening of my shoulders.

Later, I returned to what was now my own bedchamber and carefully disposed of the stiff corpse. Within the next twenty-four hours, I had replaced every single staff member in the palace except for Fannie. The golden veil lay gracefully spread out on the bed. A stack of letters from foreign countries sat, unopened, on the ornate desk. My knife rested in the drawer of the nightstand.

I sat on the edge of the bed, satisfied.

Anthropocene

Mia Majstorovic *Burnaby South Secondary*

Elina turns rigid, remembering her fear of the dawned era. Over the years, constant anxiety has become ordinary, succeeding in a war for sanity beginning decades ago during 2020. Currently, it's the only emotion driving her in ecological sciences. It's also the reason Elina is poised in front of the convention center, preparing for the most critical debate in her career. She believes that without human ignorance, this argument would be irrelevant.

A man widely known as Locke stands across the courtyard, opposite herself. Locke is an emblem of wealth in the city, a philanthropically kind businessman pursuing natural resources and human welfare within the continent. But in tonight's convention, she advocates for environmental preservation, while he encourages economic development. It's impossible for the solution to be balanced between both opinions. One issue's answer becomes a conflict against the other.

He lights a cigarette, and Elina looks past him. The fumes coil into the chilly air, intermingling with factory smoke ascending from the quay downriver. From her position in the city, on Hill's Crest, there's a view beyond the crystalline towers in Downtown, off the shoreline. Stacks of timber, mountains of coal dust being sprayed to prevent combustion, all illuminated by yellow industrial lamps, are lain to rest at water's edge. *Exploitation- A cause of the first artificial mass extinction.* Elina's skin prickles at the thought. The Anthropocene isn't her burden, but she's selfless enough to treat it this way. The newest geological era was inevitable with the destruction people had caused, possessing *grandness* about it, in how the success of colonizing Earth's entirety has ultimately caused civilization's downfall. The intelligence of humans has spiraled a new era into existence, albeit a terrible one.

Entranced by the horrors by the riverbank, Elina scarcely notices a crowd entering the glass doors of the building. People brush alongside her, giving confused glances. Vaguely, from her unwavering anxiety, she recognizes another subtle danger. *Overpopulation.* This detail only passes through what is the periphery of her focus. Vigilance isn't required to notice the threat.

The scent of cigarette smoke enwraps Elina, and she turns. Locke's eyes gaze into her own. Taken by surprise, she's forced into silence as he greets her.

"Lovely day today, no? It'll rain soon though," Locke's voice is innocently inquiring. Elina watches the factory smog and wishes to contradict him. "This year, I've given much to hospital research. I can help you too, at little cost. I require your support in industrializing further down the river, improving employment rates for the poor."

Elina almost screams *NO*, she cannot do something contributing to her crippling fear of the Anthropocene and global extinction and the pressure of saving Earth in a single meeting tonight. Then, a drop falls from the sky, meeting Locke's wrist by his jacket's cuff. He hisses, shocked his flesh reddens, shrivels and dies.

"Acid rain's gotten more severe since 2020." Elina whispers, and she strides inside the convention center.

Ignorance, the central cause of the Anthropocene.



Sirènes

Emily Liu *École Burnaby North Secondaire*

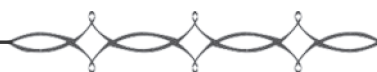
L'ambulance a sifflé dans les rues, sa sirène féroce ne laissant aucune place pour interroger l'urgence. À l'intérieur gisait mon grand-père qui s'efforçait de garder son calme pour moi malgré ses bras tremblants et son teint en sueur. Mon cœur s'emballa lorsque je lui parlai en mandarin, intensifiant ainsi un lien qui libérait mes larmes. Il leva les yeux vers moi en souriant; Je savais que tout allait bien se passer ...

Mon grand-père est l'incarnation du soin altruiste et de l'empathie. Je me souviens de mon enfance, quand il m'emmenait jouer ou acheter mes biscuits préférés, avant de rentrer chez moi pour raconter des histoires passionnantes dans notre langue commune. Il n'a jamais manqué de suivre mes accomplissements, souriant de sa douce manière pendant mes rites de passage à l'école catholique ou l'exubérance des jours de pluie. Je répondais à son soutien de la sorte en gardant sa santé en échec, en prenant soin de prendre ses médicaments, en le louant pour avoir perdu du poids. Nos soins mutuels ont créé un lien qui nous a rendus inséparables.

Cependant, je me suis retrouvé à pousser mon grand-père sur le côté alors que je donnais la priorité aux obligations d'une vie de plus en plus occupée. Il semblait qu'il se passe tellement de choses au lycée qui méritaient mon attention à l'époque. Je ne verrais pas plus tard que, comme mon grand-père gardait ses distances, il restait impatient de connaître mes efforts par l'intermédiaire de mes parents, sinon de directement de moi. Il a continué à m'encourager avec une main de prêt si j'en avais besoin, mais j'ai pris sa gentillesse pour acquis jusqu'à ce que je l'ai presque perdu pour de bon.

Alertée par les gémissements et les cris faibles de mon grand-père tôt le matin, je me suis précipitée pour le voir se blottir dans son lit, incapable de bouger de la douleur atroce dans son abdomen. Terrifié, j'ai appelé les ambulanciers, mes yeux ne quittant jamais son visage. Je l'accompagnais dans l'ambulance, lui servant d'interprète, tandis que son expression fatiguée mais aimable m'émouvait aux larmes. Tout ce que j'avais pu perdre, tout ce que j'avais pris pour acquis, tout me frappait à la fois et je repensais aux moments où j'avais refusé à tort l'amour à quelqu'un de si cher pour moi. J'ai peut-être eu une idée fausse que je pourrais appuyer sur le bouton de pause dans notre relation. Tout ce à quoi je pouvais penser était le soutien que je pouvais apporter pendant le temps que nous avons encore ensemble.

Quand nous nous séparons, en disant au revoir dans notre langue, je chérirai son sourire, non seulement comme une incarnation de sa gentillesse, mais aussi comme un rappel de partager l'empathie qu'il m'a inspiré à maintenir.



Bioluminescence

Jenna Han *Cariboo Hill Secondary*

I rode my bike through the forest, my wheels grinding against the dirt path, whizzing past the community of underbrush and thorns. A peaceful breeze cooled my face on a warm summer evening; a pleasant image compared to my spandex shorts sticking to my sweaty thighs. There were still slight traces of light peeking through the trees – any other time of the year and it would be dark by now. As the path turned to a descent, I could see the dock down in the distance, and the bay surrounded by vast, green mountains. A streak of purple and orange sliced through the clouds along the horizon, just barely peeking over the land. It was only a matter of minutes before a complete sunset.

The beautiful, movie-like scene ended abruptly as my front wheel got caught on a mushy lump and I was thrown off my bike, into a clutter of plants that stood taller than my waist. Startled and dishevelled, I slowly emerged from the bushes like an alien that woke up to find itself on another planet. I looked over to my bike to see what dared stood in my path, slightly pissed. There I saw a squashed, moldy orange, juice splattered all over my wheel like spoiled orange spray paint. The orange oozed onto the path, its spilled guts slowly trickling down the hill.

I took an exaggerated step over the monstrous leaves that clung to my clothes, begging me not to leave. I dusted off my shirt and shorts, then grabbed my bike from off the ground to continue on my way. Before I left, I made sure to kick the remains of the moldy orange off of the path just so I could express my love and appreciation for it. Rolling my eyes (at what, I'm not sure, I just felt the need), I started towards the dock again, making sure to be careful and watch where I was going.

By the time I reached the dock, it was dark out, so I could see the stars and the full moon. The breeze was stronger now that I was right by the water, and I could feel myself getting a bit cold. I unzipped my bag and grabbed a blanket. I sat down right at the edge of the wood and looked down into the mysterious, enchanted water. Little glowing specks of light floated around; the bay a reflection of the starry night sky. This was the whole reason why I came down here – to see the bioluminescence. It was magical, alluring, and calming all at the same time. You could only catch it on summer nights like these, and I wouldn't miss it for the world. The serene atmosphere could resolve any conflict or turmoil, and just the thought of this place brought peace to my heart.



Qui je suis

Shana Ip *École Moscrop Secondaire*

J'étais censée de rester ici pour 7 semaines. C'était ce qu'on m'avait dit il y avait 6 mois, 3 jours et 35 minutes. Oui, je compte. Je compte toujours. Si je ne compte pas, je vais mourir, j'oublierai qui je suis. En 4 ans, 8 mois, 3 semaines, 2 jours et 25 minutes je peux partir juridiquement si elle ne revient pas, si je peux survivre si longtemps.

Depuis que je suis jeune, j'ai compté. Je comptais tout ce que je pouvais, les plantes, les panneaux, les personnes, n'importe quoi. Je ne sais pas pourquoi, peut-être pour me calmer, peut-être pour que je puisse me souvenir qu'il y a quelque chose que je peux contrôler.

1 an, 4 mois, 6 jours et 38 minutes. Le temps que je suis ici. J'ai compté pour tout ce temps, pour ne pas oublier qui je suis quand j'essaie de cacher mon identité. Au lieu de dire la vérité de mon passé, je dis que j'étais orpheline, que c'était ma tante qui m'a laissé ici et qu'elle va revenir. Je dis que j'ai encore de l'espoir qu'elle va revenir mais c'est seulement un autre mensonge parmi une vie remplie de mensonges.

Ma vie est parsemée de mensonges. Les mensonges d'où je viens, de quelles langues je parle. Les mensonges que j'ai dit si souvent qu'ils semblent vrais. La seule chose qui n'est pas un mensonge est ma boîte. Ma boîte, 7 centimètres par 7 centimètres, fait de l'écorce interne du cèdre, quelque chose immensément importante à ma culture. La boîte que ma grand-mère m'a construit et m'a donné qui contient les secrets de qui je suis.

2 ans, 4 mois, 3 semaines, et 42 minutes. Je ne me souviens pas de mon passé, je ne me souviens pas de qui je suis, ma langue, si j'ai une famille. Rien du tout. Tout ce que je sais est que, pour ne pas être tabassée, je dois parler leur langue, répondre à leurs questions et rester silencieux. Je continue à compter, mais je ne sais pas pourquoi. Je n'ai pas de chance pour partir, même si je veux. J'ai entendu dire que tu peux partir quand tu as 18 ans, mais je ne suis pas sûre. Ils ont gagné ce petit jeu qu'ils jouent avec moi, ce jeu qu'ils appellent des "écoles".

Ma boîte, je l'ai trouvée hier, la boîte qui va me rappeler de qui je suis. Je l'ouvre, avec l'odeur du cèdre qui porte doucement à mon nez. Je vois une petite pièce de bois avec une scène d'un orage. Je me souviens maintenant! Ceci représente mon nom, qui veut dire "tonnerre". Il y a un autre objet, un petit oiseau qui représente mon clan. Je sais qui je suis. Les mémoires de qui je suis, que j'ai une famille qui m'aime, ma culture: que je suis indigène.

Je suis Nimkii Shawanda, de la nation Anishinaabe et peu importe ce qui se passe, ils ne vont jamais me forcer à oublier qui je suis.



The Stranger Across the Table

Denice Dublin *Burnaby South Secondary*

As they sat at the dining table, the same way they did every night, she tried to find the eyes of the man she loved. But no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't find them. All she found were the clouded, intoxicated eyes of a stranger.

"I thought you said you would stop," she whispered, afraid awakening the monster that could arise in him if she allowed her voice to reach anything higher than a mouse's squeak. "You haven't gone to work in weeks."

"I know what I'm doing," the stranger grumbled back, banging the bottle in his hand onto the table and creating a loud *BANG*. Everything on the surface shook a little, the empty beer bottles, cigarette butts, unwashed dishes, as if his booming voice scared them just as much as it scared the sad girl at the other end of the table.

She looked at his eyes, hoping to find the ones that she continuously failed to find. It had been exactly two weeks since she last saw them, exactly two weeks since the stranger stumbled through the door with a drink in his hand and a monster growing in his heart. The unfamiliar man in front of her resembled the person she loved, but something about him wasn't quite right. His eyes were always empty and sunken, his skin pale and lifeless, and his voice coarse and angry. The man she loved was nothing like this though. His eyes were bright and would light up at the sound of her voice, his skin warm as if it was always being kissed by the sun, and his voice was always calm and sweet. Yet she knew in her heart that these two people, the stranger and the man she loved, were indeed the same.

"I thought you said you would stop," she repeated, wanting him to realize how much it hurt her to see him slowly throw his life away each time he picked up a new bottle. *"You haven't gone to work in weeks."*

Then, as if he were a ticking time bomb, *tick, tick, tick*, the stranger exploded.

"THIS IS THE ONLY THING THAT MAKES ME FEEL!" the monster inside of him shouted. In that moment, she felt her heart shatter into a million pieces. She knew his eyes were empty, but she didn't realize the emptiness spread all the way to his heart. He was drowning far too deep in the alcohol, her love could no longer make him feel anything.

Together they sat without a word leaving their lips, eyes directed to the floor. Suddenly, the young girl got up and walked away.

She returned and sat down in her seat across the table, a full bottle of alcohol in her hand. Though the substance was what killed the man she loved, she wanted to feel what he felt. After one long drink, she pulled her lips away from the poison.

"Maybe now we can feel something together for once."



Her Little Brown Bag

Kaia Richardson *Burnaby South Secondary*

This girl was not a normal girl, and everyone knew it. She would come out at sunset, and then disappear the next morning without a trace! As a child I would sometimes catch a glimpse of the petite girl in her tattered pink dress scampering across the street in front of my home after dark, always clutching her little brown bag. I wondered what she had in that little brown bag. It had to be precious to her, for she always held it tightly in her scrawny hands. My wonder grew, and grew, and grew, until it consumed me completely.

One night after seeing the girl run passed my house, I crawled out of bed and sneaked out onto the road through my window and hurried after her, cautiously avoiding her gaze. I watched her tiptoe along the old street. The night air was chilling, and I could only imagine how the cobblestones must have frozen her bare feet. The girl never once turned back, but from the side I could see how the dark illuminated her ghost like features. Her short dark hair bounced around her face as she danced along the ground, twirling and skipping and hopping, to wherever she intended to go. Soon the girl stopped, knelt down, opened her little brown bag, and picked up a shining silver coin. She dropped the coin into her little brown bag and continued twirling and skipping and hopping down the street. The girl occasionally stopped to gather other shiny trinkets. She collected a broken pocket watch, a lady's golden necklace chain without a clasp, and even a cracked spectacle.

As dawn approached and her little brown bag grew heavy, the girl crossed the street and ducked into an alleyway and then behind an old looking wall. As I watched her through a thin hole in the rock, I saw her lie down on her side among the clumps of grass and moss behind the weathered stone wall. She carefully took out her little brown bag, untied it, and as she peered lovingly into her little brown bag, I noticed that the inside of the bag started to shine a soft golden glow. The girl emptied the glowing trinkets into her hands, and suddenly a small white bird flew behind the wall and onto the girl's arm. She motioned for the bird to take the trinkets, and the animal obeyed. Carrying the treasures, the bird flew towards the rising sun and disappeared in the distance. After that, the sun seemed a little bit brighter than it was before.

Realizing what time it was, I dashed home along the cold cobblestone road, my feet racing almost as fast as my heart, and my heart almost as fast as my mind. Since that night, the sun's been a little bit brighter than it was before.



The Side of Frosty We Don't See

Amelia Logan *Cariboo Hill Secondary*

Frosty the snowman is not the fun loving Christmas icon that the world has come to love. Everything you know about him is just a cover by the world's governments to convince us that Frosty the snowman was not a notorious criminal.

His story starts in a rural village just outside of Moscow in early 1912.

Frosty is of course of Russian descent but he was forced to live undocumented with his wife and three children. The Russian government has always discriminated against inanimate objects possessed by the devil. Somehow the police found his family. For fear of being imprisoned, they fled the country. He found refuge with his family in the land of Serbia. He was hired by the Serbian government as a snow dealing expert.

A few peaceful years past, now he had become corrupt and a rather big fish in the black market of international snow trading. There was now lots of turmoil between Serbia and Hungary-Austria after they blocked Serbia off from Bosnia. Bosnia was home to some of the world's finest snow, the best ski resorts in the world. Frosty was tasked by the Serbians to send a message to the Hungary-Austrians.

He assembled a team of the seven deadliest killers in the country to accompany him on his mission. The Archduke Franz Ferdinand was their target. The archduke and his wife were going to be in a parade on the day the 8 terrorists were in town. Frosty's team was in position, the carriage came into their sights. He had the perfect shot. He pulled the trigger and the bullet shot straight through both their skulls. The perfect shot. Chaos erupted, the local police captured the rest of Frosty's team as he fled to a nearby river, where he melted himself so he could travel undetected. While he floated back home, the other terrorists were beaten, tortured and eventually executed for their crimes.

These events started World War I and sent the world into violence until 1918. All the death and sadness can simply be blamed on Frosty the snowman.



LE TEMPS

Austin Ma *École Moscrop Secondaire*

Le temps, c'est la métamorphose
Du cocon au papillon.
Dotées d'une patience fervente,
Les larves attendent, et se réjouissent.
Avec l'espérance d'une vie prospère,
Les papillons s'éclosent.
Mais pour exhiber leur beauté,
Ils ne vivent que quelques jours.

Le temps, c'est une tasse de café
Amer, comme nos échecs cinglants
Inspide, comme l'ennuie sans fin
Sucré, comme nos souvenirs ravissants.
Le plaisir nous inonde, mais
on se noie dans l'oubli
du fond imminent de
cette tasse de café éphémère.

Le temps, c'est la fugacité du jour
Au crépuscule, un testament à l'illumination,
Le soleil crée son oeuvre d'art
avec ses couleurs chaleureuses.
Miroitée sur l'océan serein,
la scène plonge dans les ténèbres.
Ces moments époustouflants
méritent plus de temps.

Le temps, c'est injuste.
Le bonheur se dissout dans un instant,
La marée engloutit nos châteaux de sable,
L'eau coule toujours entre nos doigts.
Trop souvent, un enfant veut jouer dehors,
mais la permanence de la nuit
impose son omniprésence
Désespéré, l'enfant sanglote.

Cependant, c'est le temps qui nous permet
De flotter avec le courant de la vie,
D'étancher notre soif à apprendre,
Et de nager vers le succès.
Si on veut allonger le temps,
et maîtriser l'horloge
Il faut laisser l'eau couler,
s'évaporer, et se condenser.

Gray

Serena Dong *Moscrop Secondary*

He is a living shadow,
That trails behind his partners,
Black and White.

He has hair,
that reflects the light of a soft moon,
Silvering due to the blooming of life.

His emotions are hidden within,
The many clouds that cover,
The bright blue sky.
Covered by a lustrous barrier,
The emotions,
Are eager to burst,
And rain down on every living thing.
Make them feel,
How hard it is,
To be an endless storm.

He cries,
But nobody hears.
He beats the cement walls,
Until his fists bleed,
But his blood,
Is colourless.

The morning dew,
That shimmers in his eyes,
Creeps around at dusk,
Like a cow's breath on a frosty morning.

He is neither good or bad.
His situations are neither clear or
misunderstood.
He is unlike others.
He is Gray.



In the Red

Amy Ng *Moscrop Secondary*

Red is
shorthand for high passion
No one can stop her revolutions
She laughs at others when they turn the corner
But hides behind her painted smiles
Red is unpolite danger
With the soft sway of her hips, she captivates the room
Her hair twirls like the falling autumn leaves
As she saunters ever closer, her gait leaving you breathless
Her dress shimmers like rolling mist on a mirrored lake
Quiet as spiders' silk when she stalks the room
Louboutins that click-clack across the cold marble
Eyes feasting upon each guest as though prey
Blind and passionate in pursuits of love, war, and danger
Fickle as a cat in choosing lovers
Whose bed to sleep in each night
Red who leaves without a trace
but a crimson lipstick mark in the mirror
And the sweetest high chuckle
That's Red

Sunday

Alice Park *Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

Crinkling of cotton sheets
pressing quietly against the flutter of consciousness
Through the windows
passing, filtering, dance over the silence of
morning birds

Demure welcoming, body still furred
burrowed in warm heavy-eyed content
Hide and seek with dawn and dew
caught by the slow sunrise
retract all glory, the day is still cold

Walls, rebounding morning air
mourning air, sleep has passed
Routine peeking, one drowsy eye
looks around,
is the world still there?

Seagulls

Polina Petlitsyna *Burnaby South Secondary*

I squint to follow
Seagulls,
Hundreds of them,
Like frosty white rockets splitting the skies,
Adorning their feathers with the crisp salty air,
Aware of the ocean's dark reality;
A truly humbling sight,
For they could have stayed by the shore
With folded wings.



First Love

Chloe Huang *Burnaby North Secondary*

was he your first love?

yes.

was it real love?

i'm not sure.

it was nothing like what you see
in those Oscar-winning films
or New York Times bestselling books.

real love is not like that.

there were no heart-wrenching sacrifices
or grand romantic gestures.
no dancing wildly in the pouring rain
to music only we could hear,
our warm skin pressing against each other.
no kissing as a perfect rainbow pierces the wet mist.

he couldn't see rainbows.

but orange lollipops are the best tasting ones.
that is a fact we made up,
and i whole-heartedly believe it to be true.

if both our walls had doors and
not just beautifully stained windows,
maybe it would have worked.

we didn't buy extravagant gifts.
we were broke high-schoolers rich
in unbroken promises,
but i got him an umbrella when he broke his.
the only music we could hear was
our soft voices that weren't quite whispers
as we laid, bodies melting together
like the sun to the horizon.

he couldn't see rainbows
but i laughed so incredibly hard with him
that colourful stars spilled over into my world,
drowning the sky,
blurring my vision.

so that must be enough.

for now, yes.

it was real love.

Little Black Dress

Julia Han *Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

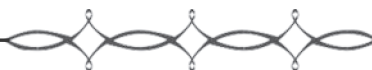
Bright lights and red tags invite your curiosity in,
You have a stiff habit for feeling fabrics,
Satin and denim sashaying underneath your
privileged fingers,
Fingers that love the feeling of encryption of
limitless.

You slip into the silhouette that mimics every curve,
Looking at your reflection,
Admiring the way the ebony fabric hugs you,
Fit to perfection.

Somewhere 345,712 miles away,
A girl sits under the dimly lit roof of a textile mill,
Fingers stiff and arms aching,
Praying to avoid the heat of the leather strap against
her supple skin.

Stitching seam after seam of the very ebony you so
love,
While the machine whirs without worry,
A mere twelve years is all she has experienced,
Five of those spent making the clothes that hang
upon those shiny racks.

If you knew that calloused hands made it,
If the materials were replaced with details of labour,
If it had the tag, "Made by Abuse and Overworked
Children",
Would you still buy it?



Roasted

Jeff Zhang *Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

After I wake,
The desire grows,
For $C_8H_{10}N_4O_2$.

My vendors are endless,
And so are my potions,
But I prefer that from Pike Place.

Hot or cold,
Spring or fall,
Roasted dark or light,
Although the price be high,
The reward far outweighs the sum.

Walk in I must,
The extra drive,
Through the door,
Comes one big whiff,
Scents of robust and familiar,
Yet also warm and cozy.

The coffee lures me to the queue,
And then I think,
To select a brew,
Smooth or spicy,
Large or small,
Should it be a festive one?

And up I step,
To scan my cell,
Facing judgement,
They mark the white,
Off I'm sent with gratitude
Wait I must,
Trying to fit in,
Is it mine or is it theirs?

Then a call,
Following butchered names,
Up I step to get my buzz.

First I take one giant swig,
From bright and sweet,
To vibrant and ambrosial.
Instantaneously,
My surroundings metamorphose.

Depart I must,
With one last breath—
I cannot resist.

I then decamp.
Stimulated
In an illuminated world.

Starshowers

Stephanie Lumowah

Burnaby Mountain Secondary

The lights of the city linger far behind;
Gleaming, steadfast,
Keeping watch over lovers, workers, slumberers,
Whiling the night away.

The lights of the city linger far behind,
But snow streaks by, like stars;
The sky opens and closes, open and closes,
As universes pass by, on the tails of the wind.

The lights of the city linger far behind,
And we are swimming among the cosmos,
Blurred and dissolving, frozen and reforming,
Twisting and dancing in the night sky.

The lights of the city linger far behind,
And the sea is ahead, crashing,
Pushing and pulling, pushing and pulling,
Sending swirling breezes of salt and stardust.

The old, wise ocean, crooning,
The youthful, wild flurry, laughing,
And the distant, winking stars, always watching,
Offer blissful, lively serenity,
And a reprieve from the busy silence of
The lights of the city, lingering far behind.

So we continue driving,
Surrounded by starshowers.

How to Make a T-shirt

Sarah Li *Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

Endless rows of soft white bushels,
Harbouring a chemically induced secret.
Such innocence and purity,
Tainted by mass dispersed pesticides.

A humble worker grazes over the aisles of
natural white,
While toxic runoff infiltrates unassuming
communities.
Symptoms go unnoticed,
Until they become irremediable.

Bales of cotton fibres are spun,
Consuming thousands of litres of water,
Loose strands are ergonomically knit.
They have taken a new form.

Shipped across the seas,
Sheets of austere simplicity,
Stacked in rows,
Silently waiting to be selected.

In a time to be carefree,
The young workers are given no such ideal.
Confined to harsh conditions,
Carefully, they select a blank slate.

Gruelling hours,
A sharpened needle,
Insufficient wages,
And boundless thread.

From this,
A garment.
It drapes from a hanger,
It sits in a shop.

A consumerist high quickly wears off,
It is forgotten.
So are the undervalued workers,
And our desecrated environment.

Rose Coloured Lenses

Karen Olivares *Cariboo Hill Secondary*

People often romanticize
The pulling of petals from blooming flowers
When you can only imagine
How much pain the flower is in

Petal after petal
We tug
Forcibly yanking it away like
An arm from a torso
Limb after limb

We take beauty from grotesque events
Songs out of war
Paintings out of genocide

We make art from evil
As a way to justify
The reality we live in

With each stroke from a paint brush
Cementing blood

Each ink from a pen
Creating a world showing anxiety and solitude

Because we enjoy pain
But we convince ourselves that we need pain to
move forward
That pain is necessary

Petal after petal
Scraping the concrete ground
Before it stops moving.



Ode to postage stamps

Imran Esmail *Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

Coloured snapshots
of human life,
nature,
celebrations,
and sorrow.
From all corners
of the world,
confined by the teeth
of your perforations,
leaders
stand proud,
activists with vigour,
chauvinistic for their cause,
countries, and accomplishments.

Intricate paintings,
your wooden perfume
intoxicates me,
invigorating
the most vivid memories
that arrive
like fallen snow
to a warm, welcoming tongue.

O borderless traveller,
no mushroom,
ancient ceramic,
prestigious castle,
or immaculate beast of the wild
can match your beauty.

From the dry
desserts of Arabia
to the icy Russian winter,
I have seen the whole world
through your frame,
your eyes, and your soul.

Le Temps

Max Joe *École Moscrop Secondaire*

Le temps est un fleuve de la vie et de la mort
qu'aucune âme ne peut vaincre.
C'est une vie de souvenirs et de difficultés qui ne
seront jamais oubliés.
C'est l'essence qui garde toutes choses en
mouvement avec sa puissance tonitruante.
C'est les étoiles et le soleil qui brillent des
galaxies et des nébuleuses.
C'est la vieillesse et les nouveaux nés qui nous
enseignent l'innocence et la patience.
C'est les matinées lumineuses et les nuits étoilées
qui rendent notre vie tellement meilleure.
C'est l'évolution et le désir d'être toujours parfait.
C'est les cimetières et les enterrements qui nous
rappellent de notre destin inévitable.
C'est les engrenages et les pièces qui tournent
sans fin.
Sans le temps nous tomberions tous dans un
abîme de rien absolument rien.
Rien ne commencerait, rien ne finirait, rien ne
vivrait, rien ne mourrait, rien ne régnerait.
Le temps est partout et sans fin.



wish upon a star

Hannah Cui *Burnaby North Secondary*

You were a creator.

Writing about falling stars, wishes, billions of glittering glass shards dripping down rooftops,
close enough to touch and *believe*,
and the impossible was a story away from reality.

But *it* happened,
and suddenly words were not enough.

you realized that
every story has an ending.
no matter how hard you wished otherwise,
we are not invincible, our love cannot keep
growing shadows at bay.

but you learned.
reimagined the sky.
No stars in sight, but when it rains,
the whole world blooms

frailandsadyet
Lovely.

You are a creator

Letter to Lucy

Erika Lieu *Burnaby North Secondary*

Dear Lucy,

I remember the day when you told me about the clouds. We were sitting on a wooden park bench at the playground near my house. Fluffy white clouds were scattered across the brilliant baby blue sky. Swinging my legs that couldn't quite reach the grass, I asked, "what are clouds made of?"

Your smile was as bright as the shining sun. "Cotton candy," you replied, and I believed it. I was only four years old.

I dreamed of flying in the sky, to touch the soft pillows that were beyond my reach. In my mind, they were lighter than a feather, and I could hold them in my hands. The clouds were an unexplored adventure, but simply a figment of my imagination.

At school, I learned that clouds are condensation; merely a cold, wet haze of water vapor. You can't hold, touch or taste them. You can only admire their beauty from a distance. I learned that clouds aren't fluffy at all. Clouds are only water.

My devastating discovery of the true nature of clouds was around the time that you got sick. Mum reassured me that everything would be alright, that even though you were losing your fight with cancer, you refused to be defeated. I only now realize how strong you had been to put on a brave face for me. I visited you as much as I possibly could, but I never imagined a future without your presence. To me, death was never an option for you. I was so naïve.

On an especially dreary day when the sky was a blanket of grey, I asked Mum about you. The absence of sunlight from the thick clouds cast a shadow upon us, like nightfall had come early. "Can we go visit her? Please? I miss her a lot. I wanna know if she's okay," I insisted.

The expression on Mum's face was indecipherable. Taking my hand, she led me to the couch and took a deep breath. In a somber tone, Mum delivered the heartbreaking news with difficulty. "She's living up in the clouds now."

My whole world crumbled around me. I felt as if a stormy raincloud loomed over my head, and I was stranded and alone without an umbrella. I held onto Mum, feeling hollow inside despite being in her embrace.

Again, I dreamed of flying in the sky. It wasn't to explore a hidden world, or touch the cotton clouds; I dreamed of seeing you again.

It took me a while before I accepted your passing. The time we had together was brief, but I treasure our memories like gold. Nothing can stay forever. Eventually, the storm will pass.

My memory of you is like a cloud—it will always be up there. Even if I can't reach, hold, or touch you, I can remember you. And whenever I look into the sky, I am reminded of you.

Thank you for lifting me high enough to touch the clouds,

Your Granddaughter



Identity

Alyssa Chang *Burnaby South Secondary School*

The feeling of the bangle was foreign to her.

It was gift for her eighteenth birthday, given to her by her grandparents. The precious stone almost appeared to ripple in the light that began to skitter away, sinking beneath the copse of trees that stood at attention in the west. As she continued to study it, she noticed how the veins resembled those that ran furiously beneath her skin, carving an intricate map on her body that painted the road her ancestors took to bring her here; inked in their blood so that she could sit beneath the sky of a country foreign to their knowledge, with which she called home.

The night was humid, stifling even. It was the kind that she loathed, where blood tickled at the bridge of your nose threatening to spill and sweat plastered your clothes to your body. Mosquitos buzzed about, and she found herself frequently swatting the air, with the bangle jostling violently on her forearm. The polished piece of jewelry could not have weighed more than a few ounces, although to her it felt as if it weighed a ton.

From her spot on the porch steps she could hear the clattering of dishes and the lively banter of family as they cleared away the tables. The effortless ebb and flow between native and second language, a complex song at fortissimo with a staccato flare. She caught most of the conversations that came within hearing range, but the rest would only become muddled and dismembered in her mind. It was rare for her to completely understand what was being said, which family member was being gossiped about this time, or what was so funny that made everyone around her roar with laughter. It was like trying to read a book with numerous words scratched out, and the majority of its pages missing. Except, this was not a simple problem regarding just words, but with sounds. Sounds that should have meant something to her. Sounds that comforted her, yet at the same time she could not comprehend.

There was this kind of emptiness that was burrowed deep within her where those sounds should have taken root. It would always hurt more when she saw her grandparents. She had always found it difficult to look them in the eye, and frequently avoided talking to them all together. It was always difficult to embrace them, as the barrier between them was gargantuan and unyielding. She feared that her memory of them would only be these shallow images pigmented in the dullest shades of grey. They would only ever be clumsy strings of broken English, and masks of jubilation hiding disappointment.

They were her family, and she had let them down.

She had let herself down.



A Leap Of Faith

Erika Lieu *Burnaby North Secondary*

“Higher!” I exclaimed, laughter bubbling inside me as Mom pushed the swing. Soaring through the air, I let myself feel like a kid, and forget that we were living in a warzone.

An American fighter jet zipped overhead. Then, a flash. The ground shuddered beneath me. Another plane flew across the smoky sky. Ablaze, it torpedoed and buried itself into the side of a building.

Lower lip trembling, I hopped off the swing and into my Mom’s embrace, sheltering me from the nightmare that was our reality.

I woke to cheers of victory filling the air. Tanks rolled through the streets, and Vietcong troops marched behind. Guns in hand, the soldiers pulled their triggers towards the sky in celebration.

A shout. A scream. Stray bullets embedded themselves in unknowing civilians on their way down from the sky.

Saigon was no longer safe. The war had just ended, and the American troops were ordered to leave the country within a day; failure to do so, and the Vietcong would turn the city into an ocean of blood. My family faced a tough decision. Stay in Saigon, or flee on a dangerous journey with a slim chance of freedom. We could wade in the shallows, or dive deep into the vast ocean without knowing if we’d see land again.

In the moonlight, we scrambled aboard the cramped wooden boat with hundreds of others, also risking their lives to be free. All we had were the clothes on our backs. With a whirl of the engine, the boat propelled itself through the water. There was no going back.

Tears threatened to spill down my cheeks as I looked up at my Mom. “Are we leaving forever?” I whispered.

She pulled me into her arms. “We can’t go back, 乖乖¹; we’ll regret never spreading our wings.”

“But I’m afraid to,” I confessed, letting my tears fall, “I don’t wanna leave everything behind.”

“It builds character,” my sister joked, a weak attempt at distracting ourselves with the prospect of perishing unbeknownst to anyone else.

Looking back at the pier, my vision blurred—my home a mere haze in the distance. We never had a chance to say goodbye.

A journey by sea was gambling with your life. In search for freedom, only a few, lucky people reached that goal. Odds of survival were not in anyone’s favor. Most people lost that gamble—boats were destroyed in unforgiving storms, people perished from starvation or disease, and families were stranded out in the open sea. But, it was a sacrifice so many were willing to take.

We constantly prepared for the worse as the boat rocked violently from side to side in the treacherous, heaving waters, wooden joints groaning against the frame. It was a miracle when our boat encountered land for the first time in six days. It was as if we had woken up from a nightmare when we navigated towards the small island.

Even though our hardships weren’t over, we had survived, and freedom was no longer a dream. It was now our reality.

...

“Higher!” she giggles. Pushing the swing, I send the girl soaring through the sky. A smile stretches across her face, without a worry on her mind; her expression igniting a spark within me. Everything I have risked and lived through has been worth it. Leaping off the swing, she runs into my embrace. I hold her tightly, feeling reminiscent of when I was my daughter’s age. Without the sacrifices my family made, I would have been stuck in the shallows, never learning how to swim in the ocean of freedom.

¹ used as an affectionate form of address

A Dark Corner of A Dark Library

Jinian Beharrell *Alpha Secondary*

The space is bright and open, but people recede into dark corners.

The dull whisper of patrons, the scratch of pens, the chatter of children, the faint tapping of old keyboards fill the high ceilings.

There is a faint, musty smell of old books, broken as doors open, and returning as they shut.

The air is still, but alive.

Fourteen shelves of books are lined up like soldiers.

They are filled with permutations of books, some brand new, some held together with rolls of tape.

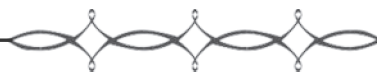
They mirror their readers.

Children crack open the spines of new books, and adults finger through the old.

Outside, families walk in endless circles around a soccer field.

Old Italian man play bocce, and a team of young girls chase a soccer ball.

I breathe. After staring around for a while, I too recede into my own dark corner.



Imbroglio

Skylar Ferguson *Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

Two-and-a-half hours later you had finally managed to get comfortable and even doze off on the awkward train seat where the headrest was too far forward and the back seemed to be at a ninety-degree angle and the lumpy cushion had been worn thin, and two-and-a-half hours later the armed men began to make use of their arms. You heard the screaming first but couldn't figure out why, because the view outside of the window was so lovely, the blue and green mountains so serene, that you couldn't seem to quite make sense of what had changed. Then it *shattered*—

Around you, a frantic cacophony suddenly erupted. In your ears and in your head your friend across from you screamed, and the others in the train car screamed, and the wind screamed and the gun in the hands of the man shrieked. Your ribs felt like ice and your eyes were on fire, and as you and your friend dropped to the floor, the sequence continued like this:

The man in this car is targeting those fleeing down the aisles, yelling at them to do as he says, *to stay still or else*, so you and your friend begin to crawl under the seats toward the opposite door. The floor is disgusting. It's gritty and sticky and smeared with unknown filth, and you shiver in revulsion as the shadows blur together in nauseating slow motion—your motions feel sickeningly slow, *not fast enough*. You haven't yet reached the door when someone behind you begins to yell, and the bullets stop, and the person keeps shrieking, *run, run!* You and your friend don't see who it is or what has happened—a security guard? A civilian? You never find out.

Everywhere on the train is in a frenzy. Everyone's screams are thunderous in your ears: those of the hijackers yelling orders, and those of the terrified people fighting one another to get away. Your friend runs, and sobs. This is violent and chaotic, and much of it isn't even caused by the men and their weapons. You find yourselves colliding with flesh and angles, hard elbows and hard corners, as a million people strike and shove one another in a wretched attempt to be anywhere but *here*: an isolated little box on wheels, hurtling through gorgeous alpine meadows.

Eventually the hijackers get you all on your knees, and scream at you not to move, not to make a sound. Some don't abide by these rules, making them send a spray of bullets into the crowd. It's a hellish mess of trembling hot bodies crammed together, reeking of blood and sweat. Faces move around you in a lurching distortion, but all you can focus on is your friend, who shakes as she continues to sob.

The minutes turn into hours. Then years, and centuries—

They're leaving, rushing out. The train has stopped, but you don't know how long. New men fill the train car, but this time they're ushering you all *out*, yelling at one another and not you. You find yourselves on a platform. A train station, which you don't recognise. You turn to your friend, but she ignores you and runs to cling to an officer, fingers digging into his arm until they're white as bone. "Oh god! Help! They killed my friend!"

Nobody looks at you as you process her words, and your breath comes quick and shallow before stopping altogether—you realise you don't need it anymore.

How long have you been dead?



Une larme

Christina Lu *École Moscrop Secondaire*

Quand la porte s'est ouverte, il semblait qu'il y avait un mariage en train de se dérouler. Le site colossal était rempli à craquer et l'allée devant moi traînait comme un fleuve : impitoyablement interminable. Pour une famille bouddhiste, ce lieu ressemblait étonnamment à une église... ce paradoxe m'a rendu très mal à l'aise.

Savait-il que son corps serait honoré ici ? C'était comme avoir vu une renaissance : mon grand-père était réduit seulement à ses varices et sa peau affaissée. Il était un sac vide, complètement nul de son tempérament enjoué. Les jours menant à sa mort, il était devenu de plus en plus coléreux. Il avait les nerfs à fleur de peau... du moins, ça c'est ce que disait ma mère. Ce contraste était difficile à avaler. Le cadavre était mince et doux.

Rien n'était plus inconfortable que la découverte de la vie après la mort. Rien n'était plus tragique que la vie avec l'horreur de la nostalgie et de la réminiscence du toucher d'une personne décédée. Je l'ai regardé une autre fois et mon corps s'est gelé. Mon visage fondait et devenait incohérent : le reste de ma parenté pleurait tandis que je me tenais là dans un silence complet. La vérité, c'est que je ne l'ai pas vu souvent. Le lien entre moi et mon grand-père était toujours attaché avec une corde frêle. Quand même, la réalisation amère que je ne pourrai jamais l'embrasser de nouveau, le sentir de nouveau, voir qu'il sourit de nouveau...

C'était quoi ça ? Une larme ?

Je me trouvais en train de rejoindre les autres dans l'harmonie calme. Si seulement mon grand-père pouvait pleurer avec nous dans ce moment.

Le 23 septembre 2018 : c'était le jour où je me suis rendu compte que la vie ne fait qu'avancer, même si toi, tu n'es plus là.



Like Freshly Dipped Candy Apples

Utae Kanauchi *Burnaby North Secondary*

“Why do I have to wear a skirt?”

I remember asking my mother the same question every so often when I was younger.

“It makes you look pretty.”

She would answer with the same song-like tune in her soft voice as she brushed back my thick hair. We had the same silhouette, the same unruly raven locks and slightly broad shoulders. She even tied my hair like hers instead of the usual braid or pigtails. I puffed my cheeks out in annoyance while twirling a strand of hair with tense fingers.

“I don’t feel pretty,” I pouted.

“But it suits you,” she sighed.

My mother pulled up my skirt and zipped the back with a smile. I tugged the collar of my white dress shirt and looked at my small figure in the mirror. My hair was in a neat half-do clipped together with an old barrett and my skirt a bright red like freshly dipped candy apples reaching down to my knees. I awkwardly shuffled my feet, unused to the sensation of bare skin and fighting the urge to pull the fabric down to cover scars that marked my legs.

“People are going to stare at me,” I whimpered. “I don’t want that.”

My mother smiled gently at me again but her eyes darkened with pity and an unspoken sadness wrapped tightly around my chest. I could never forget those eyes.

I clung to my mother the entire night. I watched girls run with frilly dresses and sparkling skirts, their smooth, scarless legs moving freely without the world’s care. When they approached me I shrunk back as their playful eyes surveyed me head to toe. Some giggled and others pointed their fingers with scrunched noses. Apologetic parents ushered their children away and glanced at me with pitiful eyes. One girl stayed behind and kept her gaze on my red skirt. She looked up at me and grinned.

“I like your skirt,” she chirped. “It looks nice on you.”

She turned around, letting her yellow dress twirl in the air and ran back to join her friends.

* * *

I brushed my hair gently in front of a mirror and clasped it together with the same old barrette my mother gave me long ago. My feet shuffled awkwardly, still unused to the absence of fabric covering my legs. I reached behind my back and fiddled with the ribbon around my waist. My mother appeared behind me in the reflection and helped me tie a neat bow. Our silhouettes were identical, the same unruly raven locks, slightly broad shoulders, and now eyes that met at the same height. I didn’t feel the urge to pull down my dress to cover my legs. My mother no longer looked at me with that dark expression, but gazed at me with a glint of pride shining in her eyes. I looked at myself in the mirror and admired the bright red dress that I picked out.

“You look beautiful,” she said.

I’ll never forget those words.



Changes

Ella White *Burnaby North Secondary*

For the previous versions of myself:

My jacket smells like someone else. Like cigarettes and person and coffee. You could only smell it faintly if you were up close. It's pulled over someone else's hoodie. Everything I own seems to belong to someone else.

It's winter, but it doesn't feel like winter. The sun springs up in the morning like it wishes to rid of the cold. It spills out clouds like paint. I can walk up to the highest point on my street and look out into the distance. Still, it hasn't even snowed. I haven't even shivered.

You don't know me. So let me tell you who I've become. I am seventeen. I am so quiet that I get talked over. I don't know if I want to say something, or if I just want to be heard. My smile isn't loud enough. My teeth have anger caught in them. I think they always have but, now when I talk you can hear it seething.

You see, I wanted to write this because things are changing.

I am here to tell you that it will be okay.

My best friend and I ran up so far into the mountains and touched the earth and all of its sky. By mountains, I mean the tallest street I know. By earth, I mean the ground. By sky, I mean when you look at that blue strip over the horizon, it doesn't end, so touch it because it is full of colour. Because the world doesn't have to be beautiful to mean something.

I have loved and been loved. I have sunk my teeth into it like an apple and ripped it apart. I have learned to touch like rain.

I know what it means to lose someone. You know what it means to lose someone. I've learned that it doesn't hurt at first. Just slowly. Just when you're finishing the last lap of the race. Just as you're about kick the ball into the net. Pause. Hurt. Stumble.

My room smells like you. It has the drawings you made. It has the golden coins from your ninth birthday party. It has the entire Harry Potter series. Sometimes I want you to keep this space. I want the bed back on the floor. I want the guitar tucked into the corner. The desk pressed to the weird side of the room with that old monitor. The hearts strung up across my bed. But the reason I've done this is because

Things are changing. You don't need to be scared. It will be okay.

I know that the dark is scary, and not because of monsters. But it won't be eventually. Just sleep until you become yourself.

And maybe this wasn't for you, it was for me.



Grandma

Mika Kurahashi *Burnaby North Secondary*

An elderly lady wearing a peacock blue and deep purple paisley shirt sits, poised, as she reads her novel in the midst of people glued to their phones. A sense of familiarity engulfs me as I feel an ache so strong I have to look away. I turn my attention to the desolate fog covering up the ink of the sky, a world away from the hue of our packed bus. Later walking home, my thoughts wander, leading me back to the woman on the bus. Her peaceful focus triggers a land slide of memories.

I remember sitting on your lap studying every crease marking your face as you worked intently on a sudoku. I remember snuggling next to you and together calling for Grandpa to help us with a particularly difficult word from the daily crossword. I remember breakfasts of Grandpa's famous pancakes and the grins we shared as we revealed our love for whipped cream. I remember the difficulty I had in picking just one teacup from your seemingly endless china cabinet for our tea parties with lukewarm tea and scoops of sugar.

I remember the pungent scent of flowers as we picked only the best blossoms for our bouquets. I remember your arm gripping mine as I helped you walk— your sickness clinging to you, refusing to leave you alone.

"I believe that even if I'm not there physically, I will be with you in spirit," you reassured me voice breaking as we said our final goodbyes.

It's impossible to move past the idea that I am not going to see you again. I will never get to hear your loud laugh, feel your warm weathered hands, smell the vivid lavender candles you love or sit with you as the taste of our freshly baked goodies overflow our taste buds.

I didn't want to go to your funeral. I didn't want to deal with all the pitying eyes or see the tears. Little did I know that you created twenty minutes of beauty for us to spend remembering, for us to take a moment away from the relentless cycles of our thoughts. There was so much I learnt about you from one beautiful slideshow, from your final parting gift on the world. In your vibrant photos of nature, I saw the intricacy of flower petals and the beauty resting in drops of dew on a blade of grass. Each and every miniscule pebble and broken twig had its place. I glimpsed the world through your eyes.

A sharp gust of wind snatches me out of my trance and I pause to look around. I notice the warm glow spilling out onto the sidewalk from the houses of my neighbours. I spot a moth's fluttery wings flapping as it flees from darkness and I gaze at the shadows of autumn leaves cast onto the ground from the shaky streetlights. I look up at the sky, clear of fog and shimmering with tiny spots of light and I smile.



My Tall, White Wall

Suroor Mansouri *Burnaby South Secondary*

The following story is based on true events experienced by my family and many others from the beautiful city of Tripoli, Libya during the Libyan Revolution

“Mama said if you don’t get up now, she’s coming to wake you up herself,” my sister, Khayria says. She knows it always does the trick whether it is true not. It’s winter, and the frigid November air penetrates the walls, nipping at my nose making it especially challenging to leave my three layers of red, cashmere blankets. I liked it that way. Still half asleep, I slide towards the bathroom just as I hear Kareem, my brother, step out knowing the air inside is going to be nice and toasty after his scorching, hot shower. It’s a Saturday, meaning the kitchen table that gathers us every morning has a beautiful spread of freshly baked anise bread, olives, cheeses, fresh persimmons and pomegranate. The kitchen fits no more than five people, however, the warmth of the sunlight coming in through the large windows makes up for the limited space. The bright colours on the table and the smiles on my family’s face remind me why I love Saturdays so much.

I head outside to the front yard to find my father staring at the sky. “Too many clouds and it’s getting dark early,” he looks at me, “it might rain later so tell mama to bring in the laundry,” he adds. He has a look on his face I wish I could read but he tries to mask it with a smile. He does it for me, I’m sure of it. As my father and I begin to go back inside, we hear a thunderous noise. “Baba, what was that?” I ask, startled. My dad gives me a confused look then hurries me into the house. The sounds start to mix in with the screams of those behind the tall, white wall surrounding our house. The anticipation of the next sound becomes stronger with the last being forgotten in the midst of the chaos. The fear, however, remains.

Right when I think the noise is getting further away, the sharpest explosive sound finds its way into our living room, shaking the tiles beneath us and the walls around us. We find ourselves instinctively holding each other as if to shield one another, and that is only the beginning. Nothing can prepare us for what comes next.

My grandmother walks into the living room, pale in the face with her arm barely hanging on to her shoulder. She has been the most affected. She seems dead but is still breathing. She can hear sound but is incapable of replying. She collapses on the couch as I stand there shocked, nauseated as if my blood has turned to stone, holding me in my very position making me feel absolutely nothing and everything at the same time. I am infuriated that this can happen to someone so close to me but even more infuriated knowing those beyond our tall, white wall are facing much worse.

Beyond this, my memory chooses to fade. Nothing makes sense afterwards as if it is never meant to. As if things like this happen to those who can take it and move on. It was that day that taught me that these tall, white walls could no longer protect us; those who are incapable of remembering these calamities as anything more than a cold November night.



The Small Hours

Elizabeth McDonald *Alpha Secondary*

The windows are inky mirrors. Beyond the cool glass, street lamps are pale yellow candles, and the moon is a bright silver dollar. Everyone is quiet and the house pulses to the languid beat of slumbering bodies. But I am not asleep. Midnight has long passed, but I ignore the clock's neon numbers. They don't matter at night when the light doesn't shift and the shadows don't move and the darkness stretches into eternity. I must be quiet as a mouse, one step too loud might shatter the fragile silence.

I fill the silence with joy. I fill my head and mouth with songs. On a chipped kitchen tile stage, I perform with air instruments in a flannel stage costume. I am weightless. I let characters from books and movies and fantasies roam about. Without daylight devouring the space, there is room for them to exist again. There is room for thoughts and whims too.

I want pancakes. I mix just enough batter to serve one person. Oil and thick batter pop and bubble on the hot pan. The cakes are fluffy, sweet, and crisp around the edges, dripping with butter and syrup. One by one, down the stack, I savour each bite until they are gone. I line up the dishes to be washed. I arrange cups, plates, pots, pans, and cutlery into a city of careful towers and neat rows. Warm water slips between my fingers and soap suds make lacy patterns on my arms. I work slowly, and beneath my hands, ceramic and polished metal gently click and clack.

When the night is almost morning, Time's commanding face scolds me for being foolish. I spent my time like a child squandering her allowance. Exhaustion rushes over me in heavy waves of warmth and yawns rock my body. I steel myself. The day waits for no one. And when the day breaks, the silent night is shattered by the trumpets of the sun, and I snap to attention.



Memory of Kagura

Michiko Sakai *Burnaby Community & Continuing Education*

One fall morning,
she wakes up and goes to a shed
to pick some eggs with her older and younger sisters.
Cows in the shed glimpse them.
She says "Morning!" to the little one.

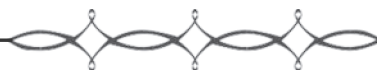
It is a big day for her 14-year-old sister.
She had been chosen for a traditional performance called "Kagura" at a local Shinto shrine.
She will be a shrine maiden and perform a dance for a myth.
In her country, people believe that there are gods all around them.
On mountains, rivers, animals and even natural phenomenon.
Kagura is a form of dance and music dedicated to gods.
The area they have lived is also the origin of the myth and the gods.

In the evening, her family goes out with sushi rolls.
The atmosphere is like a summer festival.
Attractive smells of food are coming from the street stalls along the path.
It is getting dark.
Lanterns are swinging, lighting up the path.
People are gathering.

The air is pristine.
As the sound of flute and drums starts,
the heart of the 6 year-old girl starts pounding.
On the stage of the shrine, the performance has just begun.
Her sister shows up,
wearing a beautiful kimono
dancing in sparkle,
dancing in dream,
dancing in another world.

On the way home, she sees stars covered the sky.
They sparkle as they are celebrating her sister and the performance.
Her heart is still pounding.

It has passed several decades since the memory.
She is now over 70, but her life is so busy
that she rarely sees stars in the sky,
that she hardly sees her sisters live far off.
But in her heart, the memory of Kagura is still sparkling.



DO YOU LOVE TO WRITE?

Talk to your teacher about
writing a story or poem for next year's

WORDS WRITING PROJECT.

It could be chosen to be printed in the

2019-20 Words Anthology.

Submit your written work to your teacher

by February 6, 2020.

READ RIDING HOOD

Created using painted dictionary pages and Photoshop, this piece is inspired by the classic fairytale, “Little Red Riding Hood” with a twist: the girl is seen as part of the pack.

Fiona Goldberg, Cover Artist
Grade 12, Byrne Creek Community School



Thank You to Our Community Partners

Burnabynow



ROYAL
PRINTERS