

smooth flow, as of words, poetry, or a voice.  
**mellifluous** (me lif'loo es), *adj.* = mellifluous: He is a mellifluous preacher (Newsweek). [*Late Latin mellifluens, -entis* < *mel*, mellis honey + *fluens, -entis*, present participle of *fluere* to flow] — **mellifluently**, *adv.*  
**mellifluous** (me lif'loo es), *adj.* 1. smoothly flowing: mellifluous tones. 2. having the mellifluous speech of the orator. 3. flowing with honey; made sweet with or as if with honey: mellifluous flowers. [*< Late Latin mellifluus (with English -ous) < Latin mel, mellis honey + fluere to flow*] — **mellifluously**, *adv.* — **mellifluousness**, *n.*  
**mellophone** (mel'ə fōn), *n.* a type of althorn similar to a French horn; cor. See picture under **French horn**. [*< mello(w) + -phone*]  
**melloirine** (mel'ə rēn), *n.* an imitation ice cream in which vegetable fat replaces butterfat. [*probably < mello + -ine*]  
**mello**

— *n.* **melodramatics**, melodramatic actions: tears and other melodramatics did not keep him from saying "no."  
 — **melodramatically**, *adv.*  
**melodramatist** (mel'ə dram'ə tist, -drā'mə tist), *n.* a writer of melodrama.  
**melodramatize** (mel'ə dram'ə tīz), *v.t.*, *-tized, -tizing*. 1 to make into a melodrama. 2 to make melodramatic.  
**melody** (mel'ə dē), *n.*, *pl.* **melodies**. 1 any sweet sound: The melody of the birds. 2 every busy, busy melody.  
 — *adj.* **melodious**, melodious: a melodious melody.

cred privileges.  
**sancituarly** (sang'chù er'ē), *n.*, *pl.* **-aries**. 1 a sacred place; holy spot; place where sacred things are kept. A church is a sanctuary; so was the ancient Hebrew temple at Jerusalem. 2a the part of a church around the altar. b the most sacred part of any place of worship. c the sacred place where the Ark of the Covenant was kept in the temple at Jerusalem. 3 a place of refuge or protection: a wilderness sanctuary. [*from Latin sanctuarium, sanctuary in a place*]  
 — *adj.* **sancituarly**, sancituarly: a sancituarly place.  
 — *adv.* **sancituarly**, sancituarly: sancituarly, sancituarly.  
 — *adj.* **sancituarly**, sancituarly: sancituarly, sancituarly.  
 — *adv.* **sancituarly**, sancituarly: sancituarly, sancituarly.  
 — *adj.* **sancituarly**, sancituarly: sancituarly, sancituarly.  
 — *adv.* **sancituarly**, sancituarly: sancituarly, sancituarly.



2016/17 Anthology  
**WORD PLAY**

“ I used cutouts from a dictionary to connect to the words theme; The words make up the clouds, the rain, as well as her jacket. I wanted to make it seem like the words were literally pouring out of her. I also included a pencil-umbrella as a sort of visual pun. ”

*Cover Artist Madison Luney  
Grade 11 Student at Byrne Creek Secondary*

## A Message from the Burnaby Board of Education

Unique to Burnaby School District, the WORDS Writing Project has annually showcased the best in student writing since 1985. Its growth and continued success is a direct reflection of our dedicated teachers who nurture the writing talents of their students, supportive parents who encourage their children to do their very best, and generous community sponsors who are committed to supporting youth and literacy.

We are proud to present the 2016/17 WORDS Anthology, “Word Play.” The young writers whose prose and poetry is within its pages have definitely had some fun with words - it’s as though the words have literally and effortlessly poured right out of them. Collectively, their work will play with your emotions. You will laugh and you will cry. You will experience sunny days and rainy days. You’ll be in the comfort of your home one moment, and in the next, a faraway land or galaxy.

Congratulations to the 111 students whose writing was selected for publication. You make us proud. We encourage you to keep playing with words and nurturing your writing talent. One should “never underestimate the power of the pen” – or pencil.



Ron  
Burton  
Chair



Baljinder  
Narang  
Vice-Chair



Katrina  
Chen



Meiling  
Chia



Larry  
Hayes



Harman  
Pandher



Gary  
Wong



[www.burnabyschools.ca](http://www.burnabyschools.ca)

# Word Play



## WORDS Writing Project 2016/17 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.



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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.

## My Simile Snowman Tarek Punja Gilpin Elementary

What does my snowman look like?  
 My snowman's eyes are as black as coal in the steaming train.  
 My snowman's cheeks are cold like lemonade on a hot day.  
 My snowman's nose is as orange as lava bursting out of a volcano.  
 My snowman's buttons are shiny like a diamond being freshly mined.  
 My snowman's hat is as brown as a coconut falling from a tree.  
 My snowman's scarf is fluffy like a fluffy bear hibernating.  
 My snowman's mittens are as yellow as golden sunflowers in a sunny garden.  
 My snowman's arms are long like a tree reaching for the sky.  
 This is my simile snowman!

## Winter

Amy MacDonald Gilpin Elementary

I know it is winter when. . .  
 I see snowflakes and frosty trees.  
 I can see some icicles.  
 I hear the sleds going down the hill.  
 I hear children laughing and singing a song.  
 I smell the candles and the warm fire.  
 I smell sweaty mittens.  
 I taste hot chocolate.  
 I taste the snow falling on my tongue.  
 I feel the wind and cozy hats.  
 I feel the snow and I make snow angels.  
 My senses tell me winter is here!

## Bonjour l'hiver

Davney Brault École Brantford Élémentaire

Bonjours manteaux chauds  
 Et mitaines mouillées  
 Bonjours flocons dans mon visage  
 Et glaçons très brillants  
 Au revoir l'Halloween  
 Et costumes de l'Halloween  
 Au revoir citrouilles décorées  
 Et vent dans mon visage  
 Au revoir l'automne

## A Winter Poem

Carter Kazuta Buckingham Elementary

The snow is as soft as a cloud.  
 The ice is as hard as a rock.  
 The cold is the icy wind.  
 I'd better go inside before I turn into an ice cube and freeze to death.



## 2



## Timmy Totem Pole

**Mia Diep** *Clinton Elementary*

Long ago there was a very short, grey totem pole. His name was Timmy. He lived in a village with people, trees, water and salmon that were drying. One hot and toasty evening, two young men looked at Timmy. They thought he was too short and skinny. They decided to make him the tallest totem pole.

But Timmy did not like that. He liked how every day kids would gather around him and climb on to his back. He loved his life. He didn't want to be taller.

But the next day, right before the kids woke up to gather around, Timmy was sadly cut down. He was added to another tree and built into a taller totem pole.

Hours later, Timmy stood up with the tall trees. The sun was boiling all over his head like a fire burning over him. Timmy realized how tall he was. Timmy was in big shock. He called out for

help but nobody could hear his voice. He wanted to shrink. He used all of his might to shrink but the new bottom of the totem pole held him in position.

After a long time, Timmy gave up. He started to cry. Big tears ran down his cheeks. Oh, how he wished to be small again. Day after day he became sadder and sadder. Birds always slammed into him. He missed his friends.

But soon there was a big ceremony to honour the new totem pole of the village. All the people of the village came out to dance around Timmy. They played drums and sang songs. Timmy could see all the children smiling up at him. He felt proud.

Timmy learned to enjoy the birds. He learned to enjoy his other tall tree friends. He became known as Tall Timmy Totem Pole and stood tall and proud for a very long time.

## Salmon Stone

**Emma Wei** *Clinton Elementary*

A long time ago, in a small village, while the grass was still lush green, the people went fishing in the quiet, rushing stream. While they were there, a young child named Aqawei asked her daddy, "When will the spring salmon come?"

Papa said, "They will come when you hear the first tweet of the blue jay perched on top of the blossom tree over there!"

As they started home, Aqawei found a shiny, smooth stone. She asked Papa if she could bring it home. Papa said, "Yes!" so she brought it home. She stayed and played and slept with it every single day. She would skip other rocks into the stream but not her special stone. But she never threw stones when the blue jays would tweet. And as she grew older, her stone grew older too. And she always remembered her time by the stream with her father and the salmon.

## Home Jackson Adam Aubrey Elementary

My kittens looking out the window  
excited to play with me,  
crying for company

A great blue ocean  
The sunrise on the horizon

My brother reading me a book  
at bedtime

Birds chirping in the spring  
Waves crashing on the shore

Pumpkin bread baking  
in the oven

The scent of evergreens  
The salty smell of sea water

Delicious meals my mom  
prepares for our family

Sweet, freshly picked  
blackberries

The warmth of the fireplace  
at Christmastime

The damp, coldness of  
Winter

A safe, quiet place where I can  
relax and be myself.

A warm feeling of love.

A country I can trust.

## Love

Evan Woll-Glowa Aubrey Elementary

Love is a big, warm hug.  
Love is my mom baking a cake.  
Love is birds chirping on a walk.  
Love is eating turkey dinner with my family.  
Love is feeling happy inside.

### I Love Nature

**Lilian Shi** *Gilpin Elementary*

I love,  
The beautiful wings of a butterfly,  
As it glides through a rainbow meadow,  
Fluttering its colourful wings.  
I love,  
The sounds of birds,  
Chirping on my window sill,  
As though they were singing,  
Beautiful tunes and songs.  
I love,  
How a horse,  
Leaps through the morning dewdrops,  
On the green grass,  
And throws its shiny brown mane.  
I love,  
When a whale rises,  
Out of the twinkling water,  
Then sinks back gracefully.  
I love,  
The way snowflakes dance,  
From the sky,  
Sparkling like crystals,  
As they fall down.  
I love,  
How the wind blows,  
That cause the shatter of trees,  
And the bending of grass.  
I love,  
The rise of the sun,  
The set of the moon,  
The beautiful colours,  
All around me.  
I love,  
Nature.

### Les dons de la nature

**Audrey Clark** *École Marlborough Élémentaire*

La sensation des vagues sous le bateau,  
Ma main trainant dans l'eau fraîche.  
Regarder coucher le soleil d'un canot,  
Les couleurs de rouge, jaune et orange dans le ciel.  
L'océan bleu  
Qui reflète dans mes yeux.  
La neige douce tombant du ciel,  
Une belle couverture blanche sur la ville  
Les oiseaux perchés dans un arbre  
Chantant pour moi,  
Les fleurs de printemps,  
Florissant dans mon jardin vivant.  
Les roses, tulipes et les marguerites,  
Dansant dans le vent.  
La Nature.

### All Memories to Me

**Alisa Sodol**  
*Stoney Creek Community School*

The strength of the fire,  
The thunder of the sky,  
The rhythm of the sea,  
Enlightens me.  
The faintness of the stars,  
The trail of the sun,  
A light of hope to lead,  
Comes back to me.  
The kingdom of nature,  
The citizens in it,  
The things it brings,  
All memories to me!

### Winter is when...

**Ezekiel Centeno** *Buckingham Elementary*

Soft snowflakes are swirling all around the town.  
Engulfing winds are blowing on the steeple.  
Super skiers are zooming down the hill.  
HUMONGOUS slopes are piled with snow.  
Northern lights are flickering like crazy dancers.  
Warm cocoa is soothing your throat.

### Nature

**Isabelle Chiu** *Clinton Elementary*

A wonderful, little wind whistles in the dark blue sky.  
Trees blow softly.  
Looking sideways, the trees are greenish and turquoise.  
A wonderful big blue heart is right in the middle of this fabulous piece of nature.  
The wind blows harder because it is having an excellent party in the dark blue sky.  
Birds are hanging on to the dancing trees, moving in the heavy wind.  
A hummingbird eats respectfully.

### Snow

**Lauren Feng**

*Cascade Heights Elementary*

Soft as pillow feathers  
Cold as icicles hanging on a house  
Puffs of clouds coming out of my mouth for each breath  
Silent, peaceful night snowflakes fall,  
Land like a feather  
Crisp clean air  
Fresh water falling from the sky and dissolving in my mouth  
Walking in the snow and hearing it crunch!

### L'hiver

**Ivy Lei**

*École Brantford Élémentaire*

Très beau  
Le chocolat chaud  
Jouer dehors avec amies  
La neige blanche que brille  
On fait des boules de neige  
Quand des petits flocons tombent du ciel  
Par-dessus la fenêtre, on voit les bonhommes  
Une belle écharpe et même un nez de carotte  
Et comme ça, c'est un hiver très beau et complet.

### Coal

**Gabriel Andral**

*Maywood Community School*

Useful, Flammable  
Burning, Heating, Glowing  
Ember, Fuel, Rare, Precious  
Shining, Twinkling, Shimmering  
Unmeltable, Valuable  
Diamond



### A Mother to a Daughter

**Niya Luddu**

*Buckingham Elementary*

From the day that you came into this world to the day that I die,  
I will cherish you with all my love  
I will help you be the best you can be, maybe even better  
You brighten up my world and make my life complete  
When you feel down, I will comfort you  
You are my whole wide world  
You are my sunshine, my princess,  
My everything

### My Little Brother

**Kaitlynn Siu** *Gilpin Elementary*

My little brother is so special to me,  
He's not like any other brother you see,  
As a little boy he could not talk much,  
He would cry a lot and have tantrums and such.

My mom and dad helped him along the way,  
To give him the support he needs today,  
He is such a kind, smart, and caring boy,  
Who taught us about acceptance and joy.

I love playing with him and reading with him too,  
His smile always cheers me up when I'm blue,  
We're so lucky to have him in our lives,  
We're so proud to watch him as he strives.

He has Autism if you didn't know,  
He's still a sweet, fun, happy, kind boy though.  
Kids with disabilities need love and care,  
And should be treated equally and fair.

I hope to teach kids like him one day,  
As he inspired me to think this way.  
I love and care for my brother,  
I would not change him for any other.

### Cariboo Road

**Shira Metzack**

*Buckingham Elementary*

narrow trail  
mountain slopes  
treacherous journey  
starving people  
accidents happen  
injured miners  
disappointed pioneers

### Home

**Eva Liu** *Brantford Elementary*

Home is love  
Home is joy  
Home is fulfillment  
Home is where I belong  
Home is where I feel relaxed  
A place to feel safe  
A place to find comfort  
A place where I give my heart to  
A place I will never forget  
A place that I depend on  
Home is what I depend on  
Home is where I trust to keep all my secrets  
A place where my heart is  
A place to be protected

### Abalone

**Bryden MacDonald**

*Stoney Creek Community School*

Shiny as a diamond that has never been touched,  
Rough as a very old book buried,  
Oval as a newly hatched egg,  
Swirly as a spinning vortex and the universe,  
As sketchy as a polka dotted horse,  
Abalone

### Winter is when...

**Sunny Sun**

*Buckingham Elementary*

Jolly children are laughing all around town.  
Graceful nutcrackers are dancing in Santa's workshops.  
Exquisite snowflakes are falling on porches and rooftops.  
Frigid icicles are dripping off tree branches.  
Garish colours are fading as white snow falls.  
Fragile snowmen are melting in the slippery yard.

### Blossom

**Ava Carroll**

*Suncrest Elementary*

It blossoms  
Gently, one petal at a time  
Each opens on their own  
Like waiting for a clock to chime  
When this happens, it means it is fully grown  
And when it finally opens,  
It looks like a burst of colours,  
In very soft motions  
It blossoms

### Nature's Power

**Itamar Titievsky**

*Stoney Creek Community School*

The splashing of the waves,  
The mighty strength of fire,  
The fresh air in the morning, speak to me.  
The wet grass in the garden,  
The trees that stretch into the sky,  
The heights of mountains, speak to me.  
The bloom of flowers,  
The rhythm of the wind,  
The tweeting of the birds, they speak to me,  
And I imagine Nature's power

### Who Are You?

**Emilia Cerda-Riveros**

*Cascade Heights Elementary*

I see you walking towards me through the snowstorm.  
I start walking towards you.  
You come right in front of me and I say "Who are you?"  
You smile with your diamond white teeth,  
"I was lost, but now I found you," he says.  
"You are my grandfather!" I whisper.  
As I hold his hands, he slips away.  
I wake up.  
It was just a dream.

### Gold

**Alee Moreno**

*Brantford Elementary*

Early in the morning the sun seems to disappear in the clouds

My stomach is bubbling with fear.

How did I get this near?

Before I question myself, I step in the car.

I find myself at the Olympic Oval

As I stare at the bleachers, I feel butterflies.

Shimmering in the light is the gold.

My head is blank

All I can think about is reaching my goal.

In the distance I can hear my name.

As I step on the floor

My heart is pounding faster and faster.

As I look through the window

I can see the sun shimmering

Brighter than gold.

As the competition starts

The excitement grows point after point.

I reach the Gold.

### My Heart Sings

**Sahil Sarhadi**

*Stoney Creek Community School*

The beauty of the trees in the woods, speaks to me.

The summit of the mountains tall and high, speaks to me.

The thunder of the sky roars loudly, and it speaks to me.

As the faintness of the stars shine like a diamond, they speak to me.

The strength of the fire in the forest is hot and smoky, it speaks to me.

The taste of the salmon warms my mouth, and it speaks to me.

Blue waves of the sea, speak to me.

The freshness of the air, speaks to me.

The fresh cut grass on my lawn, speaks to me.

The comforting love of my family, speaks to me.

And my heart sings.



## Hope

**Jason Han** *Montecito Elementary*

I have hoped to see my brother once again, for a long time. We have been separated, but today is the day. I finally, sneakily, get to meet my brother again. In the freezing weather, I see a blurred shadow appear. After a while, I know it is my brother trying to fight through the snow. When he is here, the first thing we do is we hold hands and we both can see the joy in each other's faces. I can feel the warmth that both of us give to each other and how happy we are that we can have some time together. But after a while I feel sad once again when we have to separate. We do our mouse squeak whisper that says our last goodbyes. From that day forward I think of how gentle and how warm my brother's hands were, and I know he feels exactly the same. After that, every day I am excited because it is one step closer to when my brother and I will hold hands and go home.

## It's Not Easy Being a Cat

**Noel Carlson** *Stoney Creek Community School*

People think that a cat is a lazy animal and life is easy being one, well I've got to say that they are wrong! A cat's life can be difficult in many different ways. You could live in a house with young children that will think of you as a teddy bear and hug you, hard! Choking on a hairball is awful in the middle of the night. And sometimes the Walmart cheap brand wet food is absolutely disgusting. Whenever my owners friends come over they always harass me by grabbing and saying "come kitty kitty kitty (that's why I usually hide in my owners room while they're over)! Getting your nails clipped is awful as well because your paws get tugged in every way and sometimes they miss your nails and your paws get cut. That's why it's hard being a cat.

## Why You Shouldn't Use Pencils

**Sloane Lemay** *Brantford Elementary*

If you're drawing with your pencil, and he doesn't like what he sees, he will summon one hundred million bees! They'll come charging at you, pointing their stingers out, and then they will sting you right in the snout! It will begin to itch, and begin to sting, then he'll summon the enormous grossest thing! It will pick you up and toss you into the sky, then you'll go soaring ever so high! Soon you'll slow down and land on the moon, then you'll meet a horrible ugly goon! It will put you in his earthling stew, you try to escape, but it just won't do! Then you try to distract him with a lie, but it just won't work so you know what happens? You die!





## The Wind Blows **Paria Khakban** *Clinton Elementary*

I was staying at Luna's house for the night. Her parents were out shopping. I was reading a book called Tornadoes 101 when Luna called my name with an exclaimed look on her face.

We looked outside. The wind and rain that had been going on for days seemed to be gradually getting worse. We both sighed with disappointment. We wanted to play outside.

Luna looked at me, her curly brown hair all messed up and with a crazy look in her hazel brown eyes. "Why DON'T we play outside?"

"YOU'RE CRAZYYYY!!!!!" I screamed. "It's freezing and wet. What would we do anyway?"

We put on shiny raincoats and walked outside. The wind was crisp and the rain was ice cold. I could feel the cold, fresh air go up my nose and ice cold water drizzled down from my wet, silky, black hair onto my face. Surprisingly, it felt calming.

We walked around her huge back yard. I was in awe of the grass because it was covered in dew that shined and sparkled like crystal stars gleaming in a green galaxy. A gust of wind interrupted the moment. We looked to the left, a huge tornado was coming down from the sky.

"AHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" We screamed in terror. We sprinted to the door faster than Olympians. The wind made it hard to open the door but we used all our strength and did it. The door slammed behind us. Luna shuddered, then screamed. We hid under a table but we saw through the rain stained window that the tornado was coming to the house. We dashed out the door.

We found her parents in their car. We got in, and at full speed, we drove out of the driveway. There was so much traffic. We could see the tornado through the back window. I hugged Luna and we screamed as the terrifying monster tornado grabbed us and threw us into the grey, cold, stormy sky like a roller coaster. We started to fall. My stomach turned. All the windows shattered and one car door ripped off as if it was a limb. We were inches away from our doom.

As quickly as it came, the tornado subsided and we dropped to the ground. Shaken and afraid, but physically okay. We looked around at the devastation and were glad to be alive.

## Le voyage d'une feuille

**Evette Oppermann** *École Sperling Élémentaire*

Je suis attachée à ma branche, une belle journée d'automne quand je tombe doucement. Quand je suis presque par terre une grande tempête commence. Je vois tous les arbres qui bougent et les nuages gris qui remplissent tout le ciel. Le vent est tellement fort que ça me pousse incroyablement haute. Je suis dans les nuages, l'air est très frais. Après, je vois une rivière rapide. La rivière est très rocheuse avec beaucoup d'obstacles dangereux. Soudain je vois une cascade proche. Je tombe de la cascade et fait un petit splash! Quand les vagues me poussent sur le gazon je vois un paradis, tous les oiseaux chantent et toutes les fleurs sont belles. Je vais rester dans ce paradis pour le reste de ma vie!

## Pourquoi l'océan est salé

**Annie Wu** *École Marlborough Élémentaire*

Il y a très longtemps, près d'un océan, vivait un vieil homme qui avait une immense boîte. La boîte était aussi grande qu'un éléphant et à l'intérieur il y avait quelque chose qui était précieux pour lui : du sel! Le sel était blanc comme la neige et les sacs de sel remplissaient toute la boîte.

Sur la terre, au bord de l'océan, vivait aussi un renard aussi grand qu'une baleine bleue. Il voulait la boîte parce qu'il pensait qu'il y avait de l'or dedans. Alors durant un jour ensoleillé, le renard géant a visité le vieil homme. Comme le renard est rusé, il s'est déguisé comme un vagabond en portant les vêtements déchirés et sales. Le renard a frappé à la porte. Heureusement pour lui, personne n'était là. Le renard est entré dans la maison et dans le milieu de la pièce il y avait la grande boîte. « Ha ha! » dit

le renard. Le renard a pris la boîte. À sa surprise, il n'y avait pas d'or. C'était du sel! Désappointé, le renard s'est fâché et a lancé la boîte de sel dans la mer.

Un épaulard passait près de la boîte. Il a pensé : « *Ça ressemble à un coffre de trésor!* » Il a pris des sacs de sel dans sa bouche, et a nagé vers sa maison avec le sel. Tout à coup, un requin est venu. Il voulait aussi le sel. Les deux poissons ne voulaient pas partager. Alors, les deux poissons se sont battus pour ce trésor. Soudain, les sacs qui contenaient le sel se sont brisés! Le sel a commencé à se diluer dans l'eau. Les deux poissons ont nagé pour attraper les derniers cristaux de sel mais c'était dilué.

Depuis ce jour, l'océan est pour toujours salé.

## Faith

**Amanda Li** *Montecito Elementary*

I was very lonely staring outside to the frigid winter snow. Longing for a rest in my own bed, I thought about what I would be doing with my family right now. Here at residential school we are never allowed to do anything with family. I kept staring at the blizzard outside. It was like remembering a younger sister whom I had lost. It reminded me of the winters in my tent when we were still together. I blinked at the canvas drapes hanging down on my bed. Shuffling around in my scratchy uniform, I gazed outside where the snow was still falling thickly. I continued doing that until I finally fell asleep. I had a dream about my cozy little tent the night before I went to school. Suddenly I woke with a start. Sadly, looking around, I was still in my dormitory. I gave a huge sigh knowing that it would be a whole year before I return home. Turning around, trying hard to imagine I was still home, I squinted my eyes trying to pretend that I was looking at the cold Arctic blizzard through the tent window. It still did not work. I looked at the clock, 3:30. I took heavy breaths trying hard not to think about my family. Even thinking about it gave me an icy feeling. I thought about the warm smile of my mother, wondering what she was doing this exact moment. Only a faint glow of a candle could be seen in the eerie darkness. My eyes closed as I fell into a deep sleep, trusting that my dreams would bring me home.

## Blackboard

**Joli Lam** *Lakeview Elementary*

Charlotte is not very sociable. She is insecure about her bulky glasses and her clumsiness. Most of the time, she prefers to be alone with her musical instruments. She is gifted in music and can play many instruments.

It is a cold October morning. As Charlotte walks to school with her backpack full of textbooks, she notices a moving truck pulling into a driveway on her block. She gazes at a boy her age standing in the driveway. To her surprise, the boy waves at her. Charlotte thinks maybe they can be friends. Just as quickly, her insecurity takes over. She looks away without waving back and walks away fast.

She finally reaches the school. She scurries straight up to the third floor to the music room nearly tripping on the stairs. As soon as she enters, she relaxes. It is the only place she feels safe.

Suddenly, she notices a message on the blackboard. It says, "Hi." Charlotte picks up a slender stick of chalk and replies "Hi" on the board. "This must be a joke," she thinks. "Well, having a pen pal as a friend is better than socializing," she soliloquizes.

Throughout the week, the messages keep appearing in the music room whenever she returns. A few times, she was close to running into the person because she noticed the chalk was still settling in the box as if someone just dropped it in as she entered the room. While she wants to catch the person, she is afraid that this is part of some mean practical joke.

The note exchanges go on for a week. The latest picture on the board is the most interesting. It looks like an animal tail at first, but, she realizes it is a treble clef. "The writer likes music," she thinks, which sparks an idea. "I am going to compose a song with this mystery person!"

Every single day, before school, at lunch, and after school, Charlotte takes turns writing down musical notes with the mysterious person. Eventually, the notes turn into a long line of music. Charlotte puts all of the notes onto paper and plays them on the piano. It sounds beautiful. It reminisces of red and orange leaves falling off trees. Landing softly on the grass swishing back and forth.

One Sunday afternoon, as Charlotte is taking a stroll in her neighbourhood when she hears the sound of a piano from down the block. The song sounds familiar. She is so distracted by the music, she nearly wipes out on the sidewalk.

Charlotte realizes it is the music she composed with the mysterious person. She follows the music. It leads her to the house she saw people moving into a few weeks ago. She sees a boy playing piano by the window. The boy looks out and waves to her. "What took you so long?" he shouts. Charlotte smiles and says, "Nice to meet you."



## Snail is Late **Felicia Shieh** *Brantford Elementary*

Once upon a time there was a jawfish and a snail. The jawfish, whose name was Skipper, and the snail, named Time-Crawler, were best friends.

On February 8th, Skipper was very delighted because he had invited his snail buddy over to his house to celebrate Skipper's birthday party later that week. What the snail did not know was that Skipper had overheard Time-Crawler talking about this birthday present. This awesome snail had bought his best friend a brand-new waterproof, submersible Drone 3000!!!! Skipper could not wait for his party, and especially for his new gift.

On February 11th, they celebrated the jawfish's birthday and all his friends came over. Sammy Scallop was there talking about the currents and waves with Cleo Clam and Olly the Oyster. Mustang the Seahorse was hanging onto the nearby seaweed. The Tangs, Susy Sohal, Flaming Vlamingi, and Sunny the Yellow Tang, were eating all the nori algae snacks by the bar. Only his best friend, Time-Crawler was late, but Skipper didn't worry. He knew snails were slow and almost always late to everything, although he was worried about the food getting cold and soggy.

Half an hour later, Skipper started to get worried. Still, he tried to stay calm by doing his deep breathing exercises like his counselor had told him to. Breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in. Breathe out. Stay calm. Aaaaaaah!!!!

However, an hour later, he was really worried about snail! An hour and a half later, Skipper was getting so agitated he felt ready to burst! Two hours later, the usually mild tempered jawfish had enough!!!! Everyone else had already eaten, sang Happy Birthday, devoured some birthday cake, opened presents, and left his party to go back to their own homes on the reef, but still no Time-Crawler.

Once the last guest had departed, Skipper quickly swam over to Time-Crawler's home, which was actually just some large underwater boulders with a delicious coating of yummy algae growing all over. As his best friend's home came into view, Skipper stopped and blinked his eyes (or he would have if fish had eyelids). Surprise, surprise, the snail was sitting right there in front of his home!!!

"Why are you waiting outside of your home?" asked Skipper.

"I'm waiting for your birthday present," replied Time-Crawler.

"Is the mail late?" Skipper questioned his buddy.

"No, no. I used SNAIL MAIL."

"Oh, I see. But why did you decide to use SNAIL MAIL?"

Time-Crawler blushed and answered, "Because it's the cheapest way to have packages crawled over."

"In that case," the jawfish stated, "we shall wait here for my gift together."

So together the snail and jawfish waited for Skipper's gift to arrive and that's how the two best friends spend Skipper's birthday. They enjoyed each other's company while sitting on Time-Crawler's porch, which were really just some smooth pebbles in front of his rocky home. Skipper told Time-Crawler all about the party and how Bella the Angelfish performed magic tricks that entertained all the guests.

Skipper's Drone 3000 finally arrived later that evening, but the birthday fish thought the best present he received for his birthday was having a buddy like Time-Crawler. It is great to have a good friend to hand out with, chew algae with, and sip bottles of sparkling spring water with. Getting his present was just "icing on the cake."



## The Chase for the Cookies **Anisha Sharda** *Suncrest Elementary*

My mom told me to take a bag of cookies to my grandma's house around the corner. I put them in the basket of my bicycle and started pedaling. As soon as I got to the end of the street I saw the Dawson brothers, the neighborhood bullies, standing there with their arms folded and looking really mean.

They were 12-year-old twins named Jack and Jason. They had light brown hair and light skin. They bullied me a lot. Whenever they saw me they had to stick their nose into my business. They were really mean. In fact, they were the meanest people in Kolasia, the city I live in.

"Where are you going?" they demanded. "Why do you need to know?" I demanded back. "Where are you going?" they said again, enunciating each word.

"Why do you need to know?" I said the same way. "Anyway, I'm going to my grandma's house. Bye." Then I rode off as fast as I could. But as soon as I started pedaling, I heard loud footsteps behind me. I looked back. The Dawson brothers were chasing me! I was scared. They were really fast runners. I was sure they'd catch up to me before I reached my grandma's house.

I once again started pedaling as fast as possible. Unfortunately, they caught up and were now running beside me. "Mmmm. Where are you taking those cookies?" they asked. "To my grandma's house," I said. Then, before I knew it, the cookies were gone. I looked back again. The Dawson brothers had run off with the cookies!

"Don't you dare do that!" I yelled. My mom had worked hard to make those cookies. I was really mad at them. Still, it was not a big surprise for me as this was expected from bullies like them. I started chasing them. "I'm catching up!" I said. I was nearing them. The brother carrying the cookies said, "Maybe now. But we'll run away, and the next time you see this bag, there'll be nothing left in it!"

I understood. The Dawson brothers were crazy for sugar. I kept chasing them, trying to run as fast as a cougar. I didn't follow the same route as them, though. I knew the city very well and I knew a shortcut to where they were going. By the time I turned onto the path they were running through, the Dawson brothers had already disappeared into their house!

I ran back to my house and told my mom what happened. Then she said, "I'll go to their house and get the cookies back. I'll talk to their mom myself. Don't worry."

We went to the Dawson brothers' house. To my surprise, the cookies were sitting on the table and the Dawson brothers were whining that they wanted to eat them! Luckily, the cookies were being guarded by their mom.

"Oh, I've been waiting for you!" she said. "I knew my children had stolen these," she said, handing us the bag of cookies. "I didn't give them money to buy anything. Here." "Thank you so much!" I said. "My mom worked hard to make these. They were for my grandma." "You're welcome," she said. "Now, you two are grounded for a week!" she said to the Dawson brothers. Then we left. I delivered the cookies to Grandma and told her what had happened. Then I went back home and I was delighted to see that mom had saved some of the cookies for me. So I washed my hands and had a delicious snack, for it had been a long day and I was hungry after the chase!

While I was eating, I thought about my day. It had been long and tiring, but I was pleased with myself for showing a lot of courage by facing the bullies and not letting them get away with stealing the cookies. The Dawson brothers had also learned their lesson that stealing is bad and thieves always get caught!

## The Mask

**Sophie Gabreldar** *Chaffey-Burke Elementary*

Delicate tears slide down your face one after the other  
 You put up the mask you have perfected so they do not see the scared insecure little girl you are  
 You smile; you laugh, but on the inside you are screaming  
 The confidence people see in you is pretend  
 You are terrified of getting hurt so you shut people out  
 Every individual jab and comment puts you in physical pain and you almost cry  
 But you don't because you're strong and you don't care just like everyone expects  
 You're strong, confident, easy going to those who look at you  
 They cannot see how it is all a façade  
 You want to feel safe  
 With every comment a piece of the mask you have perfected falls to the ground and soon nothing is left  
 They will see the pain, anger, resentment and most of all fright you have kept bottled up inside

## My Life Soars

**Cameron Nielsen** *Stoney Creek Community School*

The trail of the sun sparkles when it beams into my eyes.  
 The thunder of the sky pounds into my ear like taiku drums beating.  
 The faintness of the stars is so stunning when I look at them glowing at night.  
 The summit of the mountain so steep that if you climb it you might fall 100 feet.  
 The beauty of the trees is like an army of knights in shining armour.  
 The strength of fire is so powerful that it could knock a forest down to ashes.  
 The pale seashore with its squishy yet dry sand.  
 The animals living in harmony.  
 The sound of the birds chirping.  
 The winter snow in the early morning engulfs everything in its path.  
 This is the beauty of nature.  
 And my life soars.

### The Pianist

**Ella Go**

*Suncrest Elementary*

His finger  
Moves  
The keys  
Move  
His foot  
Moves  
The pedals  
Move  
The song  
Starts  
And the pianist  
Carries on  
To tell  
His story

The song  
Ends  
The audience  
Claps  
His story  
Will be remembered  
By the ones that understand

The pianist  
Bows  
The people  
Leave  
With his story  
Implanted  
Forever  
In their hearts

### Blue Lines

**Ella Hall**

*Sperling Elementary*

Blue lines  
So straight and true  
Carry me to the  
Ocean blue.  
Through my poems, read  
Them through  
Carry me to the  
Ocean blue.

Blue lines,  
So long and fair  
Bring me out of  
Deep despair.  
To the mountains  
Through the air  
Bring me out of  
Deep despair.

Blue lines  
So fine and lean  
Bring me to the  
Valleys green  
Where men are kind  
No one is mean  
Bring me to the  
Valleys green

Blue lines, you  
Come to an end.  
Please do not go,  
You've been a good friend  
All my troubles, you  
Seem to mend  
Please do not go,  
You've been a friend.

### Shades of Regret

**Simran Vig** *Seaforth Elementary*

I've travelled to the past  
A beautiful place  
A place where there are  
Lush greens  
Beautiful blues  
A time in the world  
Where every being had a place  
A time where everything lived in harmony  
The animals roamed  
The water flowed freely  
The birds soared in the clear sky  
I can't help but think to myself  
What a wonderful world this is  
A world where we don't exist  
And then I go forward  
To the future  
Where we have taken over  
Where the sun beats down on us  
In sweltering rays  
Where the once lush greens  
Are covered in bland grey stone  
Where the sky which once was  
A vibrant shade of blue  
Is now smeared with oily colours  
Hues made by what could only be  
Pollution  
Everything is artificial  
Everyone is infatuated  
With their own needs  
Their own greed  
People fight over space  
They fight over life  
They fight over death  
And as I look at this new world  
The world that was once filled to the brim  
With life and spirit  
I can't help but think to myself  
What a wonderful world  
We could have saved

## Remember Me

**Sally Han** *Chaffey-Burke Elementary*

### Dedicated to the Veterans of Canada

He's come so far,  
But his life is coming to an end.  
He'd fought so bravely,  
To protect the ones he loved.  
They mourn and weep for him,  
As life slowly abandons him.  
He smiles wearily,  
Because he knows,  
They will visit him,  
In Flanders Fields.  
He is holding on for them,  
But he can't sustain.  
He knows it's time to go,  
So he prays the best for his family,  
And tells them he loves them.  
His last words spoken,  
Putting all his strength in those words,  
Remember me.  
Nothing more than a raspy whisper,  
He will be blessed forever, and his last request,  
Remember me.

## Fire and Ice

**Jalen Harji** *Lakeview Elementary*

### Fire

Sparkly, ardent  
Sizzling, boiling, writing  
Conflagration, passion, pure, glacial  
Chilling, freezing, crackling  
Antarctic, wintry

### Ice

## Le Bonheur

**Lisa Lei** *École Marlborough Élémentaire*

Les bruyants aboiements des bébés chiots  
Qui courent vers moi joyeusement  
Les sourires de mes parents  
Qui m'encouragent de suivre mes rêves  
Sentir les énormes vagues qui éclaboussent  
Sur mes pieds nus  
Exprimer mon cœur privé  
Sur une grande peinture  
Une belle colonne de A  
Dans mon bulletin  
Le ballon de volleyball  
Qui tombe sur l'autre côté  
Une pirouette parfaitement exécutée  
Pendant une performance  
Qu'est-ce que c'est le bonheur  
Ce sont toutes des choses dans mon esprit

## Hope

**Sajan Senghera**

*Buckingham Elementary*

Hope... what is it?  
Hope is a little spark of light.  
That over time becomes bigger.  
But you have to keep having hope  
Or the light will disappear.  
You cannot see the light, but can feel it  
Deep in our souls.  
Among the light is shadows.  
Which do not believe in anything.  
Who have stopped believing?  
So, what is hope?  
It is a spark of light  
That you grow.



### She Dreams **Sabrina Xie** *Capitol Hill Elementary*

She dreams in darkness  
Black and white  
And

White and black  
The shadows and clouds  
That cover her whole  
She dreams in darkness

She dreams in darkness  
Until one day  
When Light  
Came walking in  
Not even looking at her  
But embracing her whole  
She dreams in darkness

She dreams in darkness  
Unable to see anything else  
But the glow that Light gives  
She ached with longing  
Longing to show him the shadows  
She dreams in darkness

She dreams in light  
Blinded by her love  
Walking side by side  
Never touching  
For he would burn her  
She dreams in light

She dreams in light  
Looking for him everyday  
Showing him the stars  
And constellations  
That align  
She dreams in light

She dreams in light  
Laughing at everything  
Smiling at her future  
Trusting him with everything  
Embracing him with all her might  
She dreams in light

### Trip

**Zohra Nikjo**

*Lakeview Elementary*

Take-off  
Enjoyable, delightful,  
Entertaining, amazing, thrilling,  
Absolutely-wonderful, strangely-boring,  
Rushing, good-byeing, packing,  
Incredibly-tiring, overwhelmingly-long  
Return



## So, You Think it's Easy Being a Crayon?

**Marley Jackson** *Stoney Creek Community School*

So, you think it's easy being a crayon? Well think again. Crayons get a special job, making kids happy, but kids don't make crayons happy. Think about it. All day long getting snapped in half, so that children can use your insides to colour their smiley-faced sun, and their baby blue ocean. Crumbles of crayon fly everywhere as kids slowly crack you into two pieces. And what about when children press way too hard to get a nice deep colour, while you're getting smoshed alive? Can't they just use a darker colour? They don't all find their crayon box either. Some just get swept into the garbage can.

Let's talk about getting your clothes peeled off and thrown away. Often, that happens to crayons. And do you think they enjoy that or something? When kids have a favourite crayon they seem to use it as much as they possibly can. And by that I mean "mixing colours." If your favourite crayon is bright sky blue please do not mix it with ripe ruby red to get poppy purple, just use a poppy purple crayon! How do you think it would feel to get forced to colour on top of another colour?

So overall, do you still think it's easy being a crayon? I hope not!

## A Beautiful Mess

**Amber Leung** *Forest Grove Elementary*

"Oh! Oh *no*..."

I look down with dismay at the gold sparkles poured all over the dark blue carpet. Everyone stops what they're doing to stare at me. I fidget nervously, then cry out, "I'm so sorry!"

The teacher looks down disapprovingly. "Oh, *no*!" she sighs heavily. "Why can't you stop making messes? That glitter was coated in glue. They won't come off the *new* carpet!"

I almost break into tears. Instead, I kneel down to try and get them off.

The gold sparkles are like stubborn little children, refusing to move when you pester them endlessly. Everyone else eventually just stops trying to help

me, going away to leave the teacher to glare down at me for making this mess.

I finally stop scrubbing the carpet. The pieces of gold seem to smirk at me, saying *You made this mess, and you're guilty.*

*Guilty.*

*Guilty.*

Someone bends down beside me, handing me a tissue. I realize it's the teacher. I shrink away from her, not wanting scolding. Not now.

"Well, it's a lot more pretty now. Almost like a sky full of stars."

I look up to her, confused. She smiles softly.

"You created a beautiful mess."

## How Night and Day Were Created

**Jessica Martinez** *Lakeview Elementary*

Once there was a grand creator who created the world. When he first created it, only darkness existed; that lasted for a few months. The people complained that nothing would grow and that it was too hard to walk around, not knowing where things were. The grand creator listened and created something called light. He gave the light a very special job. He said to the light, "Your job is to let people see. There will never be darkness again." The people cheered. "Be sure to light up everything." The light nodded and began doing its job. The people were very happy because the crops flourished and also, they stopped bumping into things. They had enough food to feed everyone. Even enough to store for later. The only problem was that it was almost impossible to sleep. The people would cover their eyes with their hands but the light wouldn't go away. It was very hard to sleep so everyone was tired all the time.

The people decided to talk to the grand creator again. The people complained to the grand creator that it was almost impossible to sleep so they wanted some darkness back. The grand creator listened and brought the darkness back. He said to the darkness, "Your job is now to bring yourself into people's lives. When someone covers their eyes, you are there. When someone says, 'I want to sleep' you are there. When..." The list went on and the darkness interrupted. "Sorry to interrupt you, but I can't remember all that!" The grand creator sighed and thought for a while. He then smiled and said "I know!" Everyone looked up at him with excitement. He went on "I will make you guys into spheres of energy that stay in the sky! If the light is in a position where it doesn't hit something like a wall of a house, then that's

where you come in darkness! There will also be designated times. When it is 6pm, you go away light, and darkness goes into the sky. You take a break light until it is 6am. Then you go into the sky but darkness still does its smaller jobs." The grand creator went on explaining this would work and both the light and darkness nodded.

Light and darkness worked well together for about a month until light realized something. "How come darkness gets to work when I'm in the sky and I don't get to do that when he is in the sky?" That's not fair!! I am going to make his shifts shorter and my shifts longer so we both get the same amount of opportunities to show ourselves off!" Light went up to darkness while he was in the sky and said "Your shift is over. It's my turn now, the grand creator said so!" Darkness nodded and went down to do its smaller jobs.

After a few hours darkness also realized something, "I was put on this world first, I deserve my time back!!" Without consulting the grand creator first, Darkness went up to the light while she was still in the sky and said "I came into this world first, I deserve my time back!!" The darkness pushed the light out of the sky causing it to fall on the people's plantations. The light went back up and pushed the darkness out of the sky. This kept going on for a while and it kept switching from being light out to dark. The people kept getting out of their beds and going back in them. They didn't know whether to go to sleep or to get up.

The grand creator saw the commotion and came down to stop it. "Stop it now! Both of you!!" The light and darkness looked down at all the problems they had caused and they were ashamed of themselves.

“I gave you a responsibility and you blew it! Now I will control you. You will no longer have the freedom you once had. I will name you day and night. When it is night, people sleep. When it is day, you are awake working or helping the community.”

The grand creator got day and night and trapped them into a smooth round rock. He buried them on the top of the mountain. This is how night and day were created.

### My Braid **Jonathan Guan** *Montecito Elementary*

When the nun was cutting my long braid, I felt that my whole world collapsed. A piece of me was just gone. I felt incomplete. After just seeing my braid, on the ground, lifeless, thinking how it used to sway around with the life in the Arctic breeze, now dead on the cold floor, I almost wept. But I knew there was no time for that, time here at this school went much faster than in the Arctic. It also would show how weak I was, and they would me the one who had to do all the extra work. The other girls' braids had also been cut off, they were just as sad as

I was. At least 10-20 braids on the floor, and worst of all, they would sweep them up into the bucket like they were junk, they were worthless. But it was something to me, it was everything, it was my treasure. It is like a baby being taken away from a mom. The nun that cut our hair threw a lighter into the pile of braids. All of our braids were burnt on a small fire, it was like they wanted to make us cry. I was glad this was over, but I worried what would be waiting next for me if this was only the beginning. What's next?

### Childish Joy **Rosalie Chady** *Forest Grove Elementary*

The green hills went on forever.

Nothing interrupted their ups and downs, the way they moved like an ocean.

I stood at the top of one, my dress fluttering around me in the cool air. The softest grass tickled my feet, and the warmest sun shone on my face. Slowly, clouds rolled over until the sky was blanketed in grey. The first drop splattered onto my face, the second one in my hair. The slow rain became faster, until all I could see was a haze of water, falling

straight down. It soaked my face and fell in my mouth. It plastered my hair to me, stuck my dress to my skin. But nothing stopped me from laughing, not even the muddy ground that stained my feet chocolate-brown. Not my goose-bumped arms, not my muddy dress. And then the tears came pouring down my face, mixing with the raindrops so I couldn't tell the difference. They spilled all my feelings out, washing away everything until the only thing left was joy.

Childish joy.



## The Ten Dollar Moment

**Claire Roe** *Sperling Elementary*

“Hey, Rose, how ‘bout a movie?” Loretta pointed to the bright pink sign of New Glasgow’s Roseland Theatre. “Ooh, how about *The Dark Mirror*, starring Olivia de Havilland and Lew Ayres?” Loretta asked.

“Sure,” I agreed as we walked to the ticket booth.

“Could we please have two tickets for *The Dark Mirror*?” Loretta asked the elderly man at the ticket booth.”

“That’ll be sixty cents for both of you,” he replied. I carefully placed six dimes on the counter and he handed us our tickets. “Please sit up in the balcony,” he reminded us, pointing to the stairs. We disappointedly agreed.

As Loretta and I started to head up the stairs, I caught something out of the corner of my eye: a black woman sitting on the bottom floor!

“Hey, did you see that?” I nudged Loretta.

“No, what?” said Loretta, shaking her head. We handed our tickets to the man at the top of the stairs. We took our seats as the lights dimmed.

I whispered, “They told her to sit upstairs, but I guess she chose not to today.” I felt a queasy feeling in the pit of my stomach.

The movie started, and we saw the title of the movie, ‘*The Dark Mirror*’ flash across the screen in bold letters. Just as the first scene started, I heard a shout.

“You can’t just arrest me for sitting down here!”

The words shook the whole theatre. Everybody looked around to see a woman being grabbed by a police officer. The woman defiantly pulled her arm away.

“You broke the rules ma’am, so you’re coming with us.”

There was a quiet murmur around the theatre. “What happened?” one woman asked. “Is that woman going to be okay?”

“This is unheard of!” barked a man from the front row. “She doesn’t belong here!”

“You tell ‘em Viola,” an elderly woman from the balcony shouted.

Shocked, I slowly sat back down, silent after witnessing such an event. I felt as though my emotions were swirling in my head—all these feelings confusing me. I felt excited, sad and worried all at the same time. And for some reason I felt proud...but why? Suddenly, I felt light-headed.

At around 8:30pm, we left the theatre. It was a fresh but rainy Friday night. The soft breeze off the Pictou Harbour was cold. I took a seat on a nearby bench.

“Hey,” Loretta asked me as she brushed off the front of her navy blue dress. “Why do you think that woman sat in the ‘whites only’ section?”

“I don’t really know. Could this change things? The respect for people, regardless of their skin colour?”

We headed for the tram, hopped on and sat at the back as usual.

We both got off at our stops.

I knew I had just witnessed a significant moment in my life.

This truly was a ten dollar moment. \*

\*Viola Desmond will be the first Canadian woman to be put on a Canadian bill.



# Ode to My Math Textbook

**Olivia Jiang** *Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

Hidden in between these  
Rough, scratched  
Evil  
Hardcovers  
Within these  
Inked, smudged  
Malicious  
Pages  
There lies a barbarous universe  
Filled with never-ending galaxies of  
Vicious numbers  
Merciless variables  
Heinous equations  
They bring long nights of  
Laments  
Forehead smacking, and  
“Why’s!”  
Flipping through these pages,  
Struggling to find the solutions,  
Is like attempting to swim through  
Heavy  
Solid  
And Forceful  
Currents,  
Fighting to take just one breath.  
Just one.  
It’s like  
Trying to dive to the bottom of  
A seemingly bottomless ocean ---

How atrocious.  
Absolutely sadistic.  
190 days of the year  
3 hours every day  
60 minutes per hour  
60 seconds in a minute  
How many torturous seconds every year,  
Is spent in these excruciating pages?  
Go ahead,  
Calculate it.  
This math textbook’s  
Brutal  
Monstrous, and  
Agonizing questions  
Have me bleeding  
Screaming  
Dying  
These villainous and wicked problems,  
That are envelopes in these worn out sheets,  
Have me begging so, so, hard  
For mercy.  
  
Oh. Wait.  
Whoops.  
I forgot that at the back of this textbook,

There is an answer key.

Ode to Cake **Alex Chan** *Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

A puff of sugar  
 Found in your pantry  
 A lump of sugar  
 Smooth and sandy  
 A pair of eggs  
 Snow white and golden yolks  
 A spoon of sugar  
 Sickly sweet and crystalline  
 A pinch of salt  
 Savoury  
 A block of butter  
 Creamy and rich  
 A slight bit of baking powder

To let it rise  
 Add some effort and affection  
 To make it fluffy  
 Now mix it together  
 And shove it into the oven  
 And observe it grow and enlarge  
 Its glossy silky beauty  
 A boulder of strength  
 Velvety as a scarf  
 Puffy as a marshmallow  
 Ding! The oven cries  
 For the cake is ready  
 The flavourful smell

Escaping the oven  
 Surrounds the delicacy  
 In which you will garnish  
 You will mix the cream  
 The soft sprinkles and icing sugar  
 To make a thick concoction  
 In which you clothe the cake  
 Slathering the creamy icing  
 Until fully covered  
 At last! The cake is finished  
 Ready to devour  
 A banquet of sweet slices  
 To share together.

## Transformation d'expression

**Zoe Simmons** *École Moscrop Secondaire*

L'anxiété prend le dessus et je suis sans voix.  
 La vérité de toutes nos peurs.  
 Un effet secondaire de la dépression.  
 On change nos expressions.

Mon estomac fait mal comme si je n'avais pas mangé dans cinq jours.  
 Sans voix dans mon monde de chaotique.  
 Le résultat de l'anxiété est la société.  
 Le roi du chaos est l'inconnu.

Mon souffle est court je ne peux pas respirer.  
 La dépression est une forme d'expression.  
 Une transformation de nos imaginations.  
 Souffrir de l'anxiété n'est jamais facile.

Retour dans la réalité.  
 Respiration ralentit, la voix revient.  
 Une variation de nos perceptions.  
 Un autre jour à surmonter l'anxiété.

## Graveyard Boy

**Isabella Funaro** *Alpha Secondary*

Graveyard Boy don't fill your head too much, because you might explode due to this sciamachy  
Graveyard Boy you're quite pathetic you know you can't even have a delusion of happiness  
Graveyard Boy this philophobia will catch up to you one day. Mommy should have raised a baby girl, you  
can keep a better son  
Graveyard Boy your laxness is appalling, are you really just so hollow?  
Graveyard Boy you're just another one to feed the ravens, don't worry about the fun and games, you  
can keep an eye  
Graveyard Boy the skeleton next to your closet door is whispering your dirty secrets and your victims  
Graveyard Boy you should really clean up the still-beating heart off the floor, it's made quite a mess of  
your brain  
Graveyard Boy they thought you needed pity, but you need emotions of your own  
Graveyard Boy you got your name because everyone thinks you're already dead, who knew they were  
right  
Graveyard Boy  
No Matter  
How Many times  
You clean the blood  
Off these walls  
The walls of your mind  
Will be  
Forever  
Stained.



## The People behind the Earbuds (Truce)

**Haleluya Hailu**

*Burnaby North Secondary*

Every person has that inner voice. The one that tells you to keep going and motivates you. The one that is the reason why you're good at so many things and so talented. The problem is I never really had that voice, all I got was the bottom of the deal. The one that makes you feel worse than you thought was possible and makes you feel as though tomorrow isn't worth it.

The clock that hung up on the wall made a noise that I got lost in. A certain "tic" that made the trees outside more interesting than whatever my teacher was rambling on about. Time seemed to fly away like everything that I had learned in the night while I was sleeping.

"Ugh, can you hurry up? Both of us know you're going to fail this grade." She sat cross-legged on the floor next to my desk. She is the half of me that tears me down. My Blurryface. High cheekbones, thin figure with perfect features all wrapped up in a ponytail. She was everything I wasn't.

She followed me back home from fourth grade and never truly left. Born from anxiety and a fear of being insignificant. The embodiment from that teacher who gave up on me.

Blurryface changed the meaning to everything I heard. "You look great." It's probably just pity. "Nice hair." Lies. "You're a great singer." Ha, she probably doesn't want you to feel bad. Every compliment was an insult. Everything only made her stronger. Until one day, a pair of earbuds changed it all. Every note was a trip to somewhere besides where I was, every lyric warmed my soul. Every song connected me to a person who I'll never meet and they don't know me but it didn't matter. We knew each other somehow. A connection between damaged people I suppose.

Every time I listened, her voice faded a little more. The people on the other side of the earbuds catered every mood and emotion to me. Certain lyrics tattooed in my brain.

"Pff, get over yourself, it's not like you could make this story any cheesier. Quit while you're ahead." My Blurryface will always be with me. She's a part of me. The people behind the earbuds keep me going.



Reflection **Breanna Lu** *Burnaby North Secondary*

Reflection.

She follows me wherever I go. Always jeering and judging. I pass by windows, look down at clear puddles, and glimpse at mirrors. She is always there. I try not to look at her; to ignore that she's there, that she is not my problem. The thing is, she is. Every time I try not to acknowledge her, my attempts are in vain. She is my problem, and mine alone. My eyes settle on the gum-littered concrete below my feet, safe from the window.

Although I don't look, I know what she's doing. It's the same every day. She stands there curtly, waiting for me to pollute my positivity with her negative nature. Her presence alone is enough to ruin almost all of my high spirits. *No Breanna. Don't let her beat you down. Keep your head up high, and force a smile. Don't infect others with this plague of negativity.*

Step by step I try to walk away from her, but I cannot; this is something she knows. Her menacing glare sears against the back of my skull, daring me to turn around and face her; daring me to do what I've been itching to do ever since this started. So, I do. Slowly, and shakily I turn around to face the vile monster that has become of the innocent, well natured girl that I used to know. The positivity, and kindness that had once emanated from her was a delight that would always pull me away from the nudging darkness inside. Now, she is nothing but a disease waiting to grasp my sanity. She is the darkness.

The moment our eyes meet, she twists her face into an ugly sneer, and I want to shrink into the frail girl that she has created. She starts to open her mouth, but I already know what's to come. As a snake spits its venom, the girl in front of me spits her poison.

"What do you think you're doing, walking around with your head so high? You have nothing to be proud of. No one cares about you. I mean, why would they? Just look at you. All the other girls are thin, while you are quite the opposite! You're dumber than a stump, and your nose is bigger than a balloon. The only thing you're capable of doing, is being a loser." She scoffs, pressing down on her nose to mock the shape of my own.

Her words hit me hard, and I fight back the tears welling in my eyes. They threaten to burst out, but every bit of dignity I have left keeps them back. *This has gone on far too long. She needs to be stopped now.*

"You know what? I don't care. I don't care that I may not be the most athletic girl in the grade, nor the prettiest. I am who I am because this is who I choose to be." I walk up to the window holding my reflection.

An idea rushes to my head and I can't help but laugh inside. I do something and all the coldness melts away, revealing a girl that I never thought I'd see again. I look straight at my reflection, and I smile.

## A dream **Zeenath Aleaf** *Alpha Secondary*

she knew they did their best, and that was all that mattered,  
she knew they did their best, yet all her thoughts were scattered

the morning calm, the summer sun; that was what she dreamed of  
to break out of the same old path,  
a puppet with her strings cut

to go away, to say goodbye,  
the stars were an escape,  
to move on, to change the world,  
leave nothing in her place

to feel waves of heat, to taste summer berries,  
to bask in their sweetness,  
to change the fortune life carries,  
to think away the bleakness

one day she'd be brave enough,  
her captivity surceases,  
but until then, she'd stay there,  
and count the broken pieces.

## "Carbs"

**Karen Olivares**

*Cariboo Hill Secondary*

You are carbs  
Yes, I love you to death but ironically enough  
You may be the cause of it  
You're such a high risk factor  
That often it's not worth letting myself around you  
My heart weakens in the time I spent with you  
And you cause my blood pressure to rise  
Just a *little* bit every time we interact  
Yet, I always end up letting myself indulge in you  
Lucky for me  
It just so happens to be cheat day

## Artificial Happiness

**Hannah Cui**

*Burnaby North Secondary*

Cheery yellow imprinted on the backs of eyelids  
Radiating bright joyful warmth  
Wax crayons smeared across open sketchbooks  
A masterpiece of smudged fingertips  
And naive, endless imagination  
Of hopeful tomorrows and  
Wishful thinking  
The future is bright, joyful, warm  
Yellow  
The colour of artificial happiness

**Summer Carolyn Chen** *Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

Summer was this:

waking to the muffled buzz of phone against swollen pillows because  
*again* you've lost the charger in a mess of clothes,  
borrowing old bicycles on a whim from your next door neighbour  
then ditching the bikes in a backyard two blocks away  
because the bus leaves in twenty  
and you need a good thirty to find a couple dimes in a pocketless dress,  
steaming in a bus full of cussing, fussing people  
before stumbling into an air-conditioned building  
thanking every deity to ever exist  
for blessing the world with Willis Carrier.  
trying out floppy sunhats with brims wider than a five-year-old's arm span  
and buying seven-dollar sunglasses from Target  
because they had dolphin printed frames  
and you were old enough to act like a child without feeling too silly.  
going home  
curled,  
with a laptop on the front porch,  
lemon balm tea cupped between knocking knees.  
stuffing sheets in sealed plastic bags and freezing them,  
as your friend in Cancun shuffles through pictures over Skype,  
the camera lens filled by flailing limbs,  
and too-loud laughter.  
Summer was this:  
school bags tucked away behind half-abandoned books  
as you finally, *finally*, sleep a full ten hours.

**serenity Elita Chan** *Burnaby North Secondary*

the sun's golden rays  
entangle itself  
with the stormy clouds  
creating a beautiful equilibrium  
of light and dark



### Sad Faces

**Nico Santiago**

*Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

Sad faces, pretty places  
Tired eyes view salmon skies  
Our hearts sink like the setting sun  
Before we close the blinds

Busy people, restless minds  
Each person, an ornate town  
With crowded streets going round and round  
An enigma of emotions surround

At eventide we lay  
But we do not rest  
We muse a million thoughts  
That equate to nothing

Tears drift down our cheeks  
Staining our clean bedsheets  
Like how we've been marked  
By our broken hearts

But we run  
From the acid rain  
And find  
Our umbrella of joy

Like moths, we are  
Attracted to the glow  
Happiness is our light  
That we chase and follow

We are like roses  
Even with the thorns  
We can blossom  
And bloom vivid flowers

Sad places, pretty faces  
Undeserving of a frown  
Sad faces can be happy  
Just turn them upside down

### Blue

**Tavin Roe**

*Cariboo Hill Secondary*

Blue water  
Blue sky  
Blue people  
Blue everything

Travelling on this boat for days, weeks, months,  
All I've come across screams blue

A once fiery and passionate people,  
Extinguished by the flames of war

Aleppo is now nothing more than remains.  
The remains of a society long lost to strife  
Destroyed by those who claim they're helping

The greed and hate that has surfaced back home,  
Is an enigma inviting a solution.

But does it exist?

Why do people of faith commit such monstrous acts?  
Is there really a God that supports this strain of cruelty?

This is certainly not what we were taught.  
Hopefully where we journey, this isn't the custom.

Hopefully where we settle, they will accept us,  
Accept me

Hopefully I won't be an unwelcome shadow,  
Hopefully I won't be

Blue

### Poem Ponder **Troy Chong**

*Burnaby North Secondary*

The white computer screen  
Stares blatantly back at me  
Waiting eagerly for my fingers  
To obtain a green signal from my brain  
To start typing  
Meaningful, eloquent words.

I am experiencing the symptoms  
Of writer's block  
Where my creative juices have dried up  
Like a lonely, decaying orange  
Uninspired to peel away its layers  
To find itself again.

The clock ticks away  
Minute by minute  
As I procrastinate and ponder  
About themes and poetic devices  
With the choice of  
Free verse, haiku, or limerick.

I feel the weight of despair  
As the words I have chosen  
Are rejected by the stroke  
Of the backspace key  
As I overthink the usage of  
Metaphors, alliteration and similes.

My dream is to create a poem  
From my lucid imagination  
Different from all others  
And now that I sit here after all the worry  
And ponder again  
I realize that...  
I just did.

### Tumbling in the Dust **Skylar Ferguson**

*Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

Green again, grey again, gone again—  
Replaced by a cerulean sky—  
A fierce carnage of colours, or,  
A circus of the senses:  
I fancy I can recognise  
The green flora; the forest  
Amidst flecks of the grinding rocks,  
The soil,  
And the infinite sky.  
My mechanical beast renders  
A gleeful cacophony of  
Clangours, clinks, rustles  
And cracks like cannon-fire  
That growl and roar in my ears  
As the fragrance of the fuel  
Glistening in the gravel  
Fills my nose—  
This was a reckless farce;  
A fool's gaffe  
With ferocious consequence:  
I fell  
Causing the motorbike to go  
Careening across the soil  
And I roll with it  
In an unrelenting race  
Gunk in my eyes, echoes in my ear, I flail—  
Until, finally, those seconds of chaos cease  
And there's crud like a knife at my back  
And liquid cerise on my leg  
And I'm gawking at the noon sun in the sky—  
And I laugh  
For I am free  
In the feral realness of the forest;  
I can rule my life as recklessly as I care  
And clear my mind of languor  
Of concerns:  
I am free to play on the green, grey, cerulean land  
With my mechanical beast

**Le Matin** **Simon Huang** *École Moscrop Secondaire*

Alors que j'ouvre les yeux à la lumière orange éclatante qui perce à travers les rideaux, le chant des oiseaux réveille mon cerveau pleinement de l'obscurité profonde.  
Je ne suis pas prêt à sortir de mon lit – les couvertures sont confortables – il est trop tôt.  
L'odeur douce, rafraîchissante et apaisante des fleurs entre dans mon nez doucement.  
Avec un bâillement doux, j'essaie de me débarrasser de toute ma somnolence.  
Ensuite, je m'étire pour enlever les derniers morceaux de mes rêves.  
Je me dirige vers la fenêtre qui est légèrement teintée, je regarde dehors, et je m'éveille au monde devant moi.  
Ensuite, l'odeur insistante du bacon attire mon attention et ma tête commence à tourner vers la direction de la cuisine.  
De nulle part, un sentiment déprimant dans mon cerveau force ma tête à retourner à sa position initiale.  
Soleil, oiseaux, fleurs, bacon, ce n'était qu'un rêve.  
Pluie, sonnerie du réveil, en retard, c'est mon premier jour  
D'école...





## The Empty Street **Nicole Liang** *Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

I stroll down an empty street,  
Casting shadows  
Like a crow's silhouette  
Against a clear sky, unbound  
And limitless, on a road far greater than I  
Yet still I walk with a lone destination

Headphones in, sweet thrums of music  
Curtain me from the murmurs  
Of countless lives unbeknownst to me  
For moments of isolation and escape  
My feet touch my own world, my own stage  
Peaceful and undisturbed by other actors

Then jarring and shattering,  
My sole slips, a struggle between  
My balance and nature's creation  
A forgotten stroke of paint on winter's canvas  
Panic consumes me, my senses scream  
I brace for a cold, callous crash

I rest my faith in a world some call unforgiving  
I reach out to life's abundance of creations  
The grand actors of the world's stage  
For a moment, I'm no longer alone  
Whether by fate or fortune's gamble,  
I touch the plays intertwined with my own

But that is just for a moment.  
I find the upper hand, stand, and move on  
Yet my mind never does  
Dwelling on this epiphany that fades into  
The sonder that passes unnoticed  
Yet shakes and trembles our beings

But my script is of my own design  
So I continued down the empty street

## Alone on the Moon **Anthony Trebunski** *Byrne Creek Community School*

What is it like?  
To be alone and to never speak your mind?  
A life secluded, unable to speak.

A life of an actor.  
Playing the part for your whole life,  
Wearing the mask.

When the mask falls off, you have long become a stranger.  
Never able to love,  
Always having feelings you can never express.

Forever isolated from the world,  
Only able to watch

From afar.

## That One Time in the Parking Lot

**Alice Park** *Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

I've never seen you cry before  
Until now  
The tears were of  
Homesickness  
Frustration  
The past  
And a sorrow I could never understand

It felt bad  
Because I could only offer  
My unknowledgeable words  
My hand, my kisses  
I couldn't help you  
You who had sacrificed so much  
Simply because I called you dad

I cried along with you  
Helpless in front of your troubles  
We were silent  
As hot tears ran down both of our faces  
I held your hand tight  
So you wouldn't  
Leave me

We sat there  
In the car  
In the parking lot  
Next to a flickering light  
At 6:20 pm  
Crying, quiet as mice  
It was a secret  
That fathers cried

You pat my head and  
Let.  
Go.  
Of my hand  
You were distant  
Embarrassed you had let me see  
The tears of a father

I kissed your cheek  
My tears leaving stains  
You turned away  
Told me don't cry  
Told me don't worry  
But I did  
Looking at you wipe your eyes

You sent me off  
Making sure that  
I didn't look like I was crying  
Because you knew what vulnerability  
Did to children  
But I cried when I was out of sight  
Of your watching eyes

Once you were gone  
I touched my tears  
They had little weight  
Compared to yours  
Yours, filled with sacrifice  
A deep melancholy  
That shocked me but then again  
I've never seen you cry before

## I'll Write You the World **Ella White** *Burnaby North Secondary*

When I'm writing, I let my mind wander into deep oceans,  
under the surface, my hair will billow up, create clouds,  
I'll watch my people dance on the beach, into the night.  
The sun will rise again, but they'll chase it down,  
like tomorrow will be the end.

Sometimes they'll dance like they're fighting,  
the colours will slap together, blue, red, green,  
orange sunsets, purple lilacs, pink puffed mouths.  
They'll scream at each other, thrashing,  
my writing stretches thin over sheets of paper; I'll stop writing.  
Instead, I'll go to dance with the people until their legs bleed out exhaustion,  
and the sand has dug into their worn sneakers.  
We'll sleep here tonight, a pocket of the ocean covering our bodies from harm.  
I'll write our destinies; we'll stay safe tonight.

Other times I'll watch my characters smile;  
somebody falls in love tonight.  
Somebody falls in love, they'll kiss for the first time.  
Tonight I'll stay steady, write like they're waltzing,  
nothing will be perfect,  
or even good.  
Nothing will be okay but,  
I promise to take care of them tonight,  
tomorrow too.

Ask me to write you a love poem,  
I'll paint you beautiful, raw skies.  
I've never been in love, but I'll make it up;  
I'll make you a paper heart and force it to beat.  
Ask me to write you sadness,  
and I'll give you rain clouds and thunderstorms like you've never seen them.  
Promise me you'll take my words,  
bury them in a grave; I'll write you a grave.  
And clutching a shovel, with dirt smeared on your cheekbones,  
hold your ground.  
Ask me to love you, and I'll try.



Sometimes when I'm writing, I'll grip the branches of a tree and start to climb.  
The branches will snap, and hit the ground.  
I'll watch them tumble beneath me.  
The ground will shake, and I'll fall, my hands painful.  
I'll keep writing,  
that's what I do.

## L'histoire perdue

**Ida Niksirat** *École Moscrop Secondaire*

Plusieurs pensent que l'histoire est oubliée quand on oublie de la mettre  
Sur du papier

Ce n'est pas vrai  
L'encre ne veut pas, ne peut pas, tout documenter  
L'encre danse sur le papier seulement dans les mains des humains  
Et les humains aiment oublier  
Aiment oublier les désastres qui créent leurs créations  
6 millions personnes tuées à travers 6 ans  
Mais la croix gammée flotte toujours

220 000 esprits « ennemis » détruits par deux avions  
Des bombes atomiques sont créées chaque jour

Les écoles résidentielles étaient faites après la deuxième guerre mondiale  
C'est vrai que c'est difficile d'y croire  
Et pourtant nous sommes encore les héros de toutes les histoires  
Vraies ou fausses  
Écrites ou pas

Beaucoup pensent que l'histoire est seulement dangereuse quand on  
L'oublie

Ce n'est pas vrai  
L'histoire est aussi dangereuse  
Quand  
On  
L'ignore

## The Turkey **Monique Rodrigues** *Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

This place called 'home,' judges silently.  
Where originality, self-confidence,  
And beauty,  
Are trapped in an oven, sizzling alive in agony and distress.

Here lies a turkey,  
Genetically modified,  
And overpowered with an influence,  
From the invasive negative thoughts of others.

A place where the turkey can't speak for itself,  
And fed by manufacturers who force unspoken goods into them,  
To benefit and satisfy themselves,  
Destroying the individuality of the past.

The turkey is filled and stuffed,  
with BBQ thoughts and salted with disgust.  
"New and improved" is all it hears,  
When its original self was ok.

The turkey's breakdown, caused by an overflow of stress,  
From the gobs of butter, to a point where suffocation is a factor.  
Its own thoughts are forever lost, and replaced with other's opinions.  
As the turkey asked itself, "What's the point of living, if you can't decide your own fate?"

## contemporary contemplations **Sophie Liu** *Burnaby South Secondary*

utterly consumed by your grace  
I find myself in a need to create  
to blame restless nights on a muse  
to wish, to love, without feeling used

reluctant eyelids propped wide  
in hope that on the other side  
dreams and lucidity intertwine  
that someday I'll untwist this spine

pillaged forests of inspiration  
translucently unrelated trepidation  
pulling shadows of beauty from thin air  
is the only way I can avoid the stares

my rhymes and imagery are only your grace  
wrapped up and packaged in thin lace  
the muse need only live like a song  
while the artist swallows her pain, and loves on





## Memories

**Erika Lieu** *Burnaby North Secondary*

“Today you have a school holiday?”

It is almost like a routine now. Ever since Grandma passed, his memory has declined at such a quick rate. I would greet him, clinging onto false hope that he would remember something, anything about me. But, he would look at me with a blank, curious stare, as if he had never met me before. Every single time, something inside my chest shatters, when I realize that I have to reintroduce myself to my own grandpa.

As I sit down beside him, I bite my lip and reply, “No Grandpa, I just came back from school. It’s Tuesday today.” Even though I know that he speaks no English except for a few memorized phrases, I still try to talk to Grandpa.

The language barrier is more than frustrating. Even when Grandpa didn’t have dementia, our conversations could only last five minutes.

“你今天好嗎 [1]?” he says. It sounds like nonsense to me. I fake a smile, nod, and respond, “yeah, uhuh.”

I get up to grab a glass of water, to avoid the awkward silence. I feel like a disappointment to him sometimes. For not being able to build

a close connection to him before he lost his memory. For not trying hard enough before.

As I make my way back to the couch where Grandpa sits, I pass by the other room where Mum and Aunt Amy busily pack Grandpa’s belongings into cardboard boxes. In a few weeks, Grandpa will be moved to a care home. He lost his independence a few months before Grandma passed, and now, my family feels he would be the most safe in a senior home.

When I sink down on the velvety cushion beside Grandpa, I can sense his confusion. With a glance of pure curiosity in my direction, he asks no one in particular, “Why is there a stranger in my house?”

“No, Grandpa, I’m not a stranger. I’m Erika, your granddaughter.” I look into the cup of water that I hold in my lap, and swallow the lump in my throat.

“Today you have a school holiday?” he says. I take a deep breath. Looking at him with a sad smile, I respond, “Yes, Grandpa, today I have a school holiday.”

[1] How are you today?

## The Boy Who Watched Stars

**Alex-Foyang Shen** *Burnaby North Secondary*

A little boy sat on the lawn of his backyard. He raised his head, catching a glimpse of the murky sky filled with thousands or even trillions of bright shining stars. Each star has a different destiny. Not only a different destiny, but a different tale to tell. The North wind blew into a breeze, but a voice toppled the sound. A voice floating towards the little child, a familiar voice.

“Everett my boy, what are you watching?” the boy’s Grandpa asked.

“I enjoy watching the stars. Not a single one is the same size. Not a single one has the same voice,” the little boy said.

“That’s true, every star in the sky is like every single person in the world. You are pretty smart Everett,” his Grandpa laughed. His grandson was smart for his age.

“Grandpa, if every single star is one of us...” little Everett asked, but his Grandpa interrupted.

“That’s right grandson,” his Grandpa replied.

“But Grandpa Cyrus, if every single star in the universe is one of us, who would then be the giant sun? The sun is a star, isn’t it?”

Cyrus looked at the sky like he had been asked one of the hardest questions. “Who is the sun? No one is, right?” the old man pondered.

“Everett, that is a very good question, but I’m afraid I cannot answer that question,” Cyrus replied sadly to his grandson.

Everett started, “Grandpa, I have been wondering about this too. The sun isn’t really a regular human.

“During the night, the sun hides away in the darkness, behind his best and only friend; the moon. We usually forget that he exists in the night sometimes. But he is always around us. Always protecting us. Always watching us. I believe.....

The  
Sun  
Is  
Love.”

Grandpa looked at the smart little boy in awe. He has a point. Without further due of thinking, his eight-year-old grandson started again.

“Love hides under the moon, who I understand as ‘hate’. It is true, Grandma Yee used to tell me before she died, “The things we hate the most generally end up to be the things we love the most.”

Those words were just sounds when I first heard them, but they hit me hard after the accident. The love always hides under the hate. Grandma Yee said, “Everett, you are a big boy. Forget and forgive the person who hit me. You might hate him, but in the end, you will appreciate what he did. Love always comes after hate.”

The full moon soared over the big universe of stars, shining on the tears rolling down the cheeks of Cyrus. Nevertheless, his little Everett will become the sun one day.

## White Walls

**Angelica Angeles**

*Byrne Creek Community School*

When my legs were shorter and  
my feet 5 sizes smaller,  
I lived in  
The four white walls of my room.

When my smile was toothless and  
Bows laced my braided hair,  
These white walls were my  
Blank canvases.

Some days,  
These canvases were lit gold.  
Other days, they were full of the  
Bustling night life of a made up city.

In the winter,  
I painted  
The sun's warmth.  
In the summer,  
I drew  
Christmas trees to dance with.

In times when the vastness  
Of what laid outside the room  
Threatened to confine my senses,  
My walls stood steady,  
Waiting to be filled  
with stories.

When my legs were shorter  
And my feet 5 sizes smaller,  
I was content  
Living in my white walls,  
For they were my small universe  
Bigger than the world outside.

## A Part of Me to You

**Caitlin Chan**

*Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

If I could speak a thousand words  
And have them all come true,  
I'd first wish this poem  
Would find its way to you.

I'd construct a lighthouse,  
That overlooks the sea,  
So that I might search for you,  
So that you might find me.

I'd build a grandiose staircase,  
That reaches towards the sky,  
So that you could finally touch the clouds,  
And see the birds as they fly by.

I'd sail the whole world round,  
Granting every wish you made  
I'd preserve your memories,  
So that they never fade.

If I could write a poem,  
Where I pour out all my heart,  
It would be so much more,  
This here, is just a part.

## A Mother's Nature

**Ariana Chou***Burnaby South Secondary*

She breathed.  
Inhale. Exhale.  
A slight, shallow sniff.  
Lungs ablaze  
a burning wildfire creeps and crawls  
prying her tarnished tonsils agape—  
painted over with a shining dark obsidian  
of slick crude oils  
of black gold.  
Her undying cough echoes  
hacking through the parched trees  
withering in soil decorated with abysmal fissures.  
Tears stream down her face  
caustic,  
acid biting at her raw cheeks.  
Her blistering wounds heal  
only to be torn apart by her children.  
Her children, whom plague her of waste  
of melted plastics and trashed metals  
that bleed out her heart.  
Her treasures and efforts robbed daily  
only to be returned ravaged and wrecked.  
A sacrifice, resignation.  
For her children. That's what mothers do;  
Provide, until incapacitated  
Give, until depleted.  
One day her children will look back  
at a loss, accompanied by a tide wave of regrets  
sorrow.  
Crying acid tears, after taking her for granted.  
Her our mother,  
her nature.

## Eye on the Horizon

**Mandy Huynh***Burnaby South Secondary*

Rosy cheeks,  
runny nose,  
red toque and warm ears.  
Squinting eyes,  
against blinding snow,  
stiff fingers tighten  
around rough rope.  
Tired limbs intertwine  
on a narrow plank,  
glossy metal  
adorns its ridged edges.  
Atop a steep hill,  
on the verge of descent,  
golden hues  
swing across my  
sightless, squinting eyes  
against the eye of the horizon.  
I lean forward,  
*whish*  
and away I go,  
into sunlight toward  
blind possibility.

## Speak Ladylike

**Fion Fung**

*École Moscrop Secondaire*

Speak ladylike  
Il est si beau de vous entendre  
Hurler des commentaires inutiles  
Qui font allusions aux idées indécentes  
Et font penser aux mots de Trump

Nous sommes un peuple docile et vulnérable  
Pas par choix, mais nous devons l'accepter  
Et nous comporter selon vos vœux  
Selon les graines que vous plantez in our heads  
Parce que c'est la faute d'Eve  
D'avoir mangé la pomme

Speak ladylike  
Parlez de vos croyances mennonistes, misogynes  
Parlez-nous de la façon dont les hommes souffrent autant que les femmes  
Ce n'est qu'une moquerie de nos larmes et notre colère  
Des innombrables années de chagrin et  
D'être secondaires aux gens qui nous ressemblent biologiquement  
Parlez-nous des droits fondamentaux  
Nous avons tous les mêmes droits et libertés que vous  
Alors pourquoi existe-t-il the disparity between us and you?

Speak ladylike and loud  
Pour que vous entendiez nos voix  
Du Canada aux États-Unis  
Pour défier les rôles que vous nous imposez :  
Un peuple poli, docile, vulnérable,  
Complètement incapable de se défendre



Speak ladylike  
Arrêtez de nous assimiler dans votre melting pot of sexes  
Because it's 2017  
Et c'est le temps d'abandonner les croyances sexistes  
Et anéantir le déséquilibre entre nos paychecks

Speak ladylike  
Nous ne restons plus silencieux  
Il fait trop longtemps que nous submit to your orders  
Alors n'utilisez pas vos mots comme du lacrymogène  
Because we have thick skin  
Et ne nous attaquez pas avec vos actions comme une matraque  
Because sticks and stones won't break our bones

### Maple Syrup

**Taryn Sabot**

*Cariboo Hill Secondary*

When I write  
It feels like my heart is coated in syrup, or some other thick, slow substance.  
The words should drip away onto the page and  
I know exactly what is needed to be said,  
And what I want to say,  
But as I let it all soak onto the paper  
Every word feels wrong  
Somehow,  
As if there's a right answer.  
Which there isn't.  
A journal is not a math worksheet.  
But I suppose it's ironic  
Because the words on the page,  
The words I write that look so wrong together,  
Feel more genuine than the words  
I speak...



### She, The Swallow

**Isabelle Quon**

*Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

She, the swallow  
She lives her life in  
soaring highs and  
bottomless lows.  
She is often pulled to places  
she'd never dream  
to go.

She indulges in the curiosity  
Of mundane human  
Affairs, delights in  
the lull of static life  
but recoils at frowns  
And winces at tears.

She, the swallow, who  
lacks the sensibility to  
fill her dancing mind,  
so full and  
teeming with wild adventures.

She, the swallow  
whose eyes know no evil,  
her thoughts  
free,  
dangling in carefree  
ambiguity.

She doesn't know the world,  
she smooths its sharp creases,  
blocks the  
incessant dissonance  
from the haven of her mind.

She is the swallow  
I dare not fix.

### The Presence in the Woods

**Constance Fung**

*Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

Walking through the empty fields  
Of places I don't know.  
The atmosphere is still yet blank, calm yet desolate.  
A cool breeze blankets over me,  
As the whoosh of the wind causes trees to dance, swaying gently  
My footsteps break the branches beneath, roots snapping violently.  
I can feel the air gaining momentum,  
Vehement gushes of icy, rough winds.  
The birds are calling frantically, flying in swarms over my head  
I see the shadows, dark and mysterious  
Perhaps they are trees, yet my unconscious says otherwise  
The figures in the woods, they haunt me continuously.  
I see the silhouettes coming for me, like a wolf after its prey,  
And I run  
Fast, away from the trees, away from reality.  
Adrenaline flows through my veins as my legs pump vigorously.  
I halt abruptly, catching my breath, heart racing  
I turn around, anticipating the worst.  
The air has become tranquil again.  
The trees are motionless, the birds, quiet.  
In what seemed like a matter of seconds, the woods have hushed.  
As if it has two personalities of its own.  
Yet I can't stop but ponder the figures I saw.  
The ambiguous unknown,  
The presence in the woods.

### Swing Out

**Billy Lin**

*Burnaby North Secondary*

*Barely Necessary*

I kneel,  
Fiddling with my shoe laces;  
My ears are pounding  
My heart,  
the same  
I ask for her hand and we smile  
“You again?”  
And off we swing

*Rock Step*

The music starts  
The beat drives my feet

Rock Step,  
I pull her closer and  
Step,  
Swirl her under my arm

Step  
Into my favourite part-  
Eyes meet-

Rock Step  
Stop and listen to the music  
Rock Step,  
Step,

Step

*Stop*

I face the crowd  
the typical-  
the already-made-its, the teal suit jackets  
I feel malaise in between the dancing mazes  
Something tells me this isn't the usual  
In her absence, a happy place seems a funeral

### “Life”

**Clare Hardjowasito**

*Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

If life were like a battery,  
Then boy we'd all be dead.

We're all stuck in our own world of technology.  
Living day to day trapped in a false reality.

From tweets to twitter,  
To the most likes on Instagram,  
To try and be the best, most successful on social media.

If only we could escape from this made up world,  
Of being the prettiest, or the richest.

And at that terrifying moment,  
When your battery reads “one percent,”  
That is when you lose all connection with the world.

Now what will you do  
You might actually have to live,  
To see the world around you.

### Living Vicariously

**Geoffrey Lau**

*Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

Two by two  
Strolling down the halls  
Through and through  
Sometimes three by three

High Fives and handshakes  
Speckled with conversation  
Happily together  
Laughing lusciously

Like elements they bond  
Though these bonds are indestructible  
Like birds they flock  
With each other, fond

They will stand the test of time  
I know, for sure  
And continue blossoming  
Like dandelions in the springtime

Each day I listen and observe  
Wondering:  
Where is mine? My best?  
Left with a feeling I do not deserve

Perhaps it is me  
Or maybe it is them  
I blame myself,  
My personality

But as I watch them go  
A certain taste  
It is reminiscent  
Like faint bordeaux

For they feel what cannot be felt by me  
For them, I only wish happiness  
For as each day goes on and on  
Through them, I live vicariously

### Severed by Lead

**Chris Wang**

*Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

You remember your first kiss with her  
Faintly lit by the yellow tinted light of the street lamp  
Her smile electrifying the air,  
creating refuge from winter's cold white blanket  
On the old wooden porch up front

The first battles bared heavy with grievance  
Along the coast, fire brewed with gunpowder  
Sulfur invaded the nose with stinging pain  
Soldiers pawns of their leaders, carriers of ideology,  
Whether freedom or unification they fight

Her warm embrace when news unfolded  
Hands grasped tightly, resisting to let go  
Eyes of uncertainty, fear and hope  
Walking out the front door prepared,  
Accepting the invitation into chaos

Bullets rain overhead  
Mortars thump the ground, shells ringing ears  
Cries of pain through the trenches,  
Craters defining the land stained with red,  
Rain attempting to thin the hue's endless flow

The anxiety as mailmen arrive to the cedar stairs  
Carrying papers narrating tales of bravery from the front  
However when no news arrives after weeks of wait  
And another uniform in blue knocks on the door  
Wounds more painful than physical inflict, scars to last forever

Recovery becomes civil war  
But acceptance comes with age  
Time resumes back to normal pace, forgetful of the past  
As worn wrinkled hands rock away alone  
On the old wooden porch up front

### The Kingdom

**Paulina Yus**

*Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

No sorrows expelled of fear  
Nor a threat towards the premiere  
For all loved in this empire,  
This was his kingdom.

The hills burn with Aether's lights  
And they cheer his name on hopeful nights,  
Until a sword was drawn and blood came cold  
And fear struck his peaceful kingdom.

Every step I take the world crumbles  
Eternal being of regret, I scream  
I damned me these troubles  
And here burns my gorgeous regime  
This is my kingdom.

If God forgives, then I beg to banish my sin.  
The future is bleak, so let this be the last you see of me  
For I hid in despair and sob my last grin  
Praying to the Great Spirit to let me be.  
And I bid farewell to my lost kingdom.

Smoke fills the empty dwelling  
Cradling the bodies to hear no yearning  
What once stood here has fallen,  
This was his kingdom.

### Freedom

**June Lee**

*Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

Freedom,  
How are you doing?  
It's been a while.  
Last I heard, you were travelling  
With the West Coast wind.  
Tell me, where have you gone?

Freedom,  
You used to say "come on"  
in a way that still rings in my ears.  
You would drive with the windows down,  
Play a game of cards,  
just like we would in grade school.

Freedom,  
You made me love chocolate milkshakes  
even though I never loved  
the bitter aftertaste.  
You had a way of smiling that had us  
at our knees.

But Freedom,  
did you have a bionic heart?  
Everyone fell in love with you,  
but woke up to an empty bed.  
Freedom, let's catch up sometime.  
I miss waking up next to you.

## Screaming

**Oona Forrester**

*Burnaby Mountain Secondary*

Debilitated by my own anxiety;  
Choking on words that don't exist. In an imaginary world of fear  
I wait for the cold constraints to lift from my chest –  
The chains don't break anymore.  
I remember when I was a bird, free from imprisonment, roaming the world.  
Now, only an empty bag of skin mimics the likeness of a girl;  
She waits to be freed again.

Only in the gentle waves of dreaming comes release.  
But, to be asleep does not mean to dream,  
And the brain burrows down into that sack of skin,  
Laying in the darkness until the light reveals fear once again.  
Human limitation and fragility brings regret –  
Anger brings drive –  
And the fear of death always forces anxiety to awaken from its devilish slumber.

And when you hear the screaming, it's only for those who aren't listening,  
Because listening means to care.  
Right foot, left foot; you do it every day.  
Don't worry, my dear, the concrete is only quick-sand,  
Step right up to the Funhouse: where nothing and everything is real;  
Masks off and then the party is through.  
No one invited you anyway.

A feast of amphetamines for those who are pushed into seclusion.  
Lock the door, quick, before she escapes –  
Don't worry, she won't.  
They say she's crazy, smart, quiet, scared.  
Mouth closed, legs closed; she's crazy.  
Smart, but not smart enough – pick a direction, honey, the clock is ticking.  
Screaming crazily. Screaming smartly. Screaming quietly. Screaming.







## Sleep **Nicole Evans** *Burnaby South Secondary*

Hands around my neck.  
Covered in sweat.  
Can't remember why.  
Panic envelopes me.

As I flail my arms and legs around to try and fight, my eyes fly open. I make eye contact with a man standing over a dresser... A dresser?

Everything suddenly warps into focus. I am in my bedroom. I am okay. It's okay. The hands around my neck is actually my bed sheet. The man over my dresser is my poster of Albert Einstein. My breathing slowly returns. I try and recall what I did last night, but I can't seem to remember; I assume that I went through my normal routine then just went to bed...  
Why am I filled with so much anxiety?

"Imagination will take YOU anywhere!" Einstein says to me sternly. He almost seems to move toward me. I shake my head awake.

My eyes fall away from Einstein staring down at me and onto my clock which reads 9:32 AM. It screams "LATE!" with its red hot voice.

Panic re-emerges and I throw the cover off me. I rush to get ready. As I fall out of bed, I realize that I must not have taken my clothes off last night as I am fully clothed, including my shoes... Normally this would concern me, but today I am late, and it quickly leaves my brain. I grab my backpack, run down the stairs and fly out of the front door.

It has been snowing for the last week, so the ground is covered in a white blanket while the sidewalk has a layer of thick ice covering it. I attempt to move as fast as I can without slipping...  
An empty lot covered in snow catches my eye. The lot looks like a bed, with two piles of snow near the sidewalk acting as pillows. It almost calls out to me to crawl into it and sleep forever...  
I shake my head and pull myself away from the bed, no matter how much I want to crawl into it... No! I need to get to school. I have an English test today on... Hamlet? I think it was... all the details from the last week seem fuzzy.

I finally reach the school doors and pull them open and am immediately greeted by a hug of warmth from inside. The school is quiet as first period is still in session. Although, the air seems... strange. I cannot explain it, it just seems like something heavy is in the air.

As I rush down the halls to my locker, a poster catches my eye. I stop to look at it. It's outside of an English class which had recently made projects on Hamlet. The poster was surrounded by others like it, but this one really grabbed your attention. It was a painting of Hamlet beside a grave looking down at the bones of Yorick and saying, "To die, to sleep, to sleep: perchance to dream."

"I don't think that's the right part of the play for that line." I mutter to myself, then I blink. Hamlet is staring at me. He wasn't doing that before. I swear he wasn't.

I step back, shocked. Hamlet continues to stare at me.  
He repeats, "To die, to sleep, to sleep: perchance to dream."  
I step back again; something under my foot crinkles.

Looking down, I realize that I have stepped on a piece of paper. I pick it up out of curiosity.  
It's a notice from the school. I must have missed getting it when I slept in. My eyes scan over the paper and pick up words,  
"grief counsellors"  
"hearts go out to the family"  
"we will always remember"  
"suicide"  
...Suicide? My heart starts banging in my chest as I look in the eyes of the student picture on the notice...  
My God...  
It's me.

**Mala Yasmin Kochhar** *Burnaby North Secondary*

Loving someone from the day you are born is absurd. *Is the love even real if it is obligatory?* I question the past sixteen years of my life as I rummage through the drawers in my room, searching for a replacement for the necklace my sister had torn from my neck only moments ago. *Why does she get to take whatever she wants from me?* I think ragefully.

I pull a dull brown necklace out of a drawer, that drawer, the one that everyone has, the one that contains the bulk of the junk people keep. Mine is filled with the useless gifts that I am spoiled with. The chain of wooden beads, however, brings back a memory of my seven year old self visiting my grandparents in India.

“... Six, seven, eight...” my grandmother counts in Hindi. Her eyes are closed while her hands move slowly around the necklace. She counts the beads soundlessly, reaching the same number each time. It is so consistent, so reliable. I am mesmerized by the cycle until I look up to see my grandmother’s open eyes staring back at me.

“Come here,” she says. I walk over to sit on the mattress that is long past overused.

“Do you know what this is?” she asks, gesturing to the necklace.

“A necklace,” I speak in the same dialect. She chuckles.

“This is no ordinary piece of jewelry. It is called a mala. There are 108 beads that each have their own meaning. Here, hold it like this. You must touch each bead gently...” she continues but her words hardly register as I carelessly pull the necklace over my head. It is tremendously long on my tiny body but I enjoy the grown up feeling that it gives me.

My grandmother smiles and I cheekily grin back.

“Keep it,” she says, “I have kept it for many years so now you take it. Hold the beads every day and they will give you wisdom back in Canada where I cannot be.” Her warm eyes glisten for a second but then close, continuing with her prayers.

I give it no additional thought, and I slap my feet down onto the tiled floors and go about stomping around the house, showing off the beads that ornament my neck.

The reminiscence fades to the neglected necklace I hold now. I realize that I am holding a piece of my grandmother’s love for me. This simple commodity used to be a part of her daily life. She gave it up on that day for me. There was no second guessing, just a simple sacrifice made for her oblivious granddaughter.

I bring the necklace — the mala — delicately up to my chest. I feel my grandmother with me through the mala. The 11,000 kilometres between us are gone and I can hear her low chanting once again. I picture her sitting on her bed; her hands are motionless, resting on her lap.

Not a Doll **Lindsay Lu** *Burnaby North Secondary*

I woke up early just to get dressed in a stark black shirt with an intricate design of a golden rose on the back, and yellow jean-shorts; it was on a fashion magazine. It looked ugly, but I didn't care, *I wanted to be fashionable, I wanted to be beautiful.*

\*\*\*\*

As I walked down the hall, I spotted a few friends. One of them saw me and waved me over, she gave me a thumbs up as she scanned my outfit. My heart instantly soared.

"You look so pretty," she gushed. "Those clothes are *insane*." I agreed. She was right, I might not be pretty, but the clothes made me more than pretty. The others all chimed in with the same thought: that I was beautiful dressed like this.

Showered by praise, I realized I didn't care how horrid the style is, *I wanted to be complimented, I wanted to be liked.* I thanked them profusely and made my way to class.

I walked over and greeted my friends enthusiastically and twirled to show off the golden rose.

"That is so lit," one of them declared. "When did you get so stylish?" Everyone laughed, me included.

"Seriously, the rose is so cute." Another nodded.

"You actually look pretty in that shirt," a third added. *Ouch.* At first, it didn't hurt much, it was like a penny-sized hole had been drilled into my chest. I laughed it off with everyone else.

But the problem with holes was: If it didn't close up, it got bigger. It wasn't that she was wrong; she was right. *I used to be ugly, I used to be worthless.*

\*\*\*\*

When I got back home, I rushed to my mirror and stared at myself. Funny how I was the one who wanted to toss it after what everyone said.

*You're actually pretty in that shirt you're actually pretty in that shirt in that shirt actually pretty (for once) that shirt (not ugly) in that shirt in that shirt (first time) you're actually pretty actually pretty pretty (not you) you're actually that shirt.*

*Why should I care about others' opinions? Why should I let them define who I was? Why did they dictate what was beautiful? Why should I let them? Who gave them that power?*

\*\*\*\*

My eyes latched onto the mirror. *She did.* She cared too much about what others thought, she let them define what made her beautiful, she let them remake her into a doll, beautiful, but lifeless. But she was not a doll. I was not a doll.

The holes in me closed up and I tossed the clothes into the garbage, because at the end of the day, how I looked was never between me and them, I looked beautiful to the only person whose opinion mattered. *I looked beautiful to me.*

Just as I was about to leave, I noticed the golden rose again, and the tiny cracks in it where the paint had peeled off.

## Comforting Lies

**Nadine Nahhas** *Burnaby North Secondary*

She spent hours scrolling through endless images of the rich and famous, admiring their abundance of wealth and cursing her lack of it. Contrary to her belief, she was far from poor. Living in a social media dominated world, where wealth and materialism are glorified, she failed to see what truly defined life and instead she was bombarded with images of what she thought would bring joy to her existence.

Her mother, a woman of humble upbringing, was repulsed by what her daughter was becoming. In a desperate attempt to prevent her daughter from being taken hostage by these images projecting a false reality, her mother took away her phone and made her a proposition that would change her life.

To regain the privilege of using her phone, she was to accompany her mother to the East Side to help deliver food to the homeless. She was mortified by this proposition. Never had she ventured outside the proximity of her middle-class neighbourhood. Rumours, dark and terrible rumours, she had heard, of uncivilized people and of rampant drug addicts. Conflicted, she was torn by her fear of the unknown and her longing for her phone, her dear friend who gave her life meaning. Assessing the risks, she reluctantly agreed to the proposition.

The girl was a stranger in foreign territory. Walking timidly by her mother's side, she dared to glance around and was shocked to see the stark contrast between the reality of these people's lives and that of the celebrities she idolized. Sleeping bags and stolen shopping carts filled

with personal possessions of a past life littered the ground. People of all walks of life sat in silence, smoking or reading torn up newspapers, united by their poverty.

As the pair reached their destination, a park which consisted of a couple of vandalized benches and a plot of yellowing grass, the girl was instructed to set up a table and hand out cans of food to those who approached her. Unrelenting thoughts plagued her mind but she persisted nonetheless.

A few onlookers mustered up the courage to approach her. They would thank her quickly and hurry away. One onlooker, a girl of petite stature, caught her eye as she approached the stand.

"Thank you," the girl said, taking a couple of cans. Pausing for a moment, she added "Most people only think about themselves. They never look beyond their little bubble." Though the young girl was smiling as she spoke, a certain sadness lingered in her eyes making them look old beyond her years. Startled, the girl behind the table longed to say something but it was too late; the young girl had disappeared. She knew that this girl, a mere child, had experienced more hardships than most adults.

Later at home, her mother thanked her for her cooperation.

"You may have your phone back," she added. "I don't think I want it anymore," she replied, pulling her mother into a loving embrace. "I will no longer be fooled by these comforting lies."

## The Membership of Adulthood

**Isabel Prpic** *Burnaby North Secondary*

The day appeared to be as any other, equipped with the typical exhausting incessant hum of societal expectations. Needless to say, I was not feeling particularly at ease. So what better place to escape it all than the Library? A safe haven, a constant in my life, which came accessorized with very few variables. I teetered across the curb, precariously balancing my worries, my umbrella, and my overdue book. The pelting rain bit at my exposed hands, hurriedly ushering me into the warm embrace of the institution. I consoled myself only with the poetry I'd been enlightened by through my lengthy withdrawal of "The Fall of America" by Allan Ginsberg. And I prepared to face the likely perturbed librarian and her wrath along with the hefty fine that neither my wallet, nor my morale could bear.

I guiltily slid the book under her line of sight. Regrettably, I acknowledged that it would be best to take the dagger of a fine now. While simply a few dollars to some, this was a slight on my honour. Mumbling to myself, I paid the fine. Surprisingly, the librarian didn't share my annoyance. She went along with protocol and performed the routine procedure, before exclaiming "It looks like you need a new card!" I was confused by her outburst. After all my library card had been the only one I had ever known, a membership to a community that cultivated my love of language. She stated matter-of-factly, "You're no longer eligible for a child's card."

*"In what universe was a sixteen year old no longer a child?"* My mind whirled, a teenager to most, but certainly not an adult. This was a universe that I did not wish to be normalized. Desperately clinging to my youth, I made an attempt to rationalize the situation in my head. Quickly disguising my scepticism with excitement, "All right, sign me up," I exclaimed. The librarian typed up a new card and speedily handed it over. Weighting the moment's significance through its symbolic resonance, "This could be considered my passage into adulthood, a membership of sorts," I proclaimed. The librarian chuckled, bemused. "Are there any benefits to this new card?" I replied, warming to the idea. The librarian answered in a dry tone, "Not really...only adult fines."

Instead of wallowing in my revelation, and dismissing this rite of passage, I tenderly placed the card in the pocket of my fleece lined vest, for safe keeping. This invaluable membership was going straight to Mom's wallet after this whole ordeal! No way, I'd trust myself with it. Perhaps, I was an adult by library standards, in this pseudo-society. Despite, the new card, I could understand that this new label was not my new reality. Without a glance back, I airily strolled through the library's automatic doors, parting like the Red Sea. In typical Isabel manner, however, my Mom and I returned, right before closing, to hurriedly search for the umbrella I had forgotten. Some things never change.



## The Second Chance William Shen *Burnaby North Secondary*

Below the dim lights of the concert hall's backstage, I sit alert at the edge of my chair, with violin and bow in hand. The crimson curtain looming before me conceals an imposing audience of hundreds—their muffled chatter fluctuating like my own anticipation-struck heartbeat. I am the final performer of the honours concert, having won first prize at the qualifying music competition, yet my primary objective tonight is to repay a debt. As my fingers silently dance across the strings of my instrument for one final rehearsal, I contemplate the reason why I am here.

\* \* \* \*

One winter, several years ago, I attended an intensive violin session in my hometown of Edmonton, Alberta. My confidence was curbed by the evident musical superiority of my peers and my hands wobbled while I stood to play an introductory solo. The audience erupted into suppressed snickers when I opened on a broken note half a pitch lower than the intended tone.

Months of arduous preparation disintegrated before my eyes. Stumbling out of the room, face aflame, I was suddenly drawn toward a euphonic melody emerging from the auditorium next door. Peering through the glass, I caught sight of a graceful figure poised on the stage. Her bow fluttered as articulately as a hummingbird, painting the air with brilliant virtuoso harmonies.

"That's Alessandra from New York," came a voice from behind. I turned around and saw one of my classmates propped against the wall with a taunting glint in his eyes. "She's the most advanced of the senior group, so she probably was better at age six than you'll be at sixty."

I recall hastening away just before tears overwhelmed me. After a lonely dinner, I was retreating to the dormitories when I came across Alessandra.

"Hi!" She said with a shy smile, and extended her hand. "My name's Alessandra. I think I've seen you around somewhere, are you also a residential?"

From that coincidental encounter on, Alessandra became my mentor. For the remainder of the two-week program, she embraced my naivety, nurtured my pride, and redefined my aspirations with her praise.

"They really should give second chances for the introductory performances," I joked near the end of the program.

"Oh no," Alessandra chided. "Life *is* the second chance. Seize it when it comes, because it'll never return."

The only thing I could do was smile.

What I find unbelievable is that in spite of my debt to her, I never paid Alessandra a genuine compliment. Nor did I ever express my gratitude. Rather, I told myself that I wasn't yet worthy and that one day I would fulfill my obligation—one day, I would make Alessandra proud.

\* \* \* \*

A crevice of light captures my attention. The grand curtains open, and I step out smiling into a spotlight. The applauding audience fades out of focus when my gaze rests upon one particular seat along the "Special Guests" row. Even from this distance, I discern a barely legible sign that I know reads a most familiar name.

But the seat is empty.

Bingo **Rachel Tsui** *Burnaby South Secondary*

There was a smell of soiled clothing, coalesced with the nauseating scent of food made-in-bulk that lingered after their meals. Helen, as my supervisor, directed me to sit next to one of the residents.

She had a sour look on her face, as if she hated every second of being there. As I introduced myself, she bore her eyes up at me.

"I'm Madeline," she drawled.

*Why did I even sign up for this?*

...

Hesitantly, I tapped a finger on a square.

"Here, Madeline. B fifteen."

She crossed her arms. With great indignation, she placed a counter on the number.

"I can do it myself!"

*I want to go home.*

...

"Dearie, please tell me. What are we doing here?"

"We're playing bingo, Madeline."

"Oh, okay." She stared intensely at the green board with its neon red chips.

"What are we playing for again?"

"A straight line, Maddy." I didn't mean to let exasperation seep into my voice.

"Oh, okay."

...

"Maddy," I slid a counter on top of her card.

"G forty-two."

Madeline playfully slapped my hand.

"Oh ho! That's a good one!"

"Oh, it sure is," Helen responded with a playful glint in her eyes, "but I've most definitely passed that age."

I smiled as I listened to their gleeful cackles filled with reminiscence.

It was definitely one of the better nights.

...

"I don't need your help! You dirty, useless Chinese." That was the first time any resident had raised their voice at me. It hurt. I know she really didn't mean it, and I never held it against her, but it was hard to forget.

...

Her room was almost empty, as if they knew it was approaching. The bare, soft yellow walls that supposedly lightened people's spirits only contrasted heavily on her greyish visage.

"Hey Maddy."

She looked up, a ghost of a smile on her face.

"Hello dear."

I walked over and sat beside her on the bed.

It smelled like fresh laundry and old age.

"What are you doing?"

"Oh, just looking at this puzzle I got," she stuttered, as if wanting to say more, but fell silent instead.

"Oh," I let my voice trail off. The silence crushed me into awkwardness, but the regret later on was worse.

I wanted to hug her, but comfort was not my strong suit. Instead, I took her hand in mine. The action felt clumsy and useless, but it could've been worse. Squeezing gently, I stood up and smiled.

"I should go now, Maddy. You need to rest."

"Rest," a breath escaped her lips. "Yes, that would be good. Good night, dear."

"Good night, Madeline."

Somehow I knew it would be the last time I saw her.

...

There was a new resident the next week.

"Everyone, meet Emma," Helen motioned to her, "she will be joining us every week for bingo now!"

When I sat down, she turned to me and grabbed my hand with urgency.

"What am I doing here?"

"We're playing bingo, Emma."

## a cry, a plea, a request: please listen to us

**Carol Zhang** *Burnaby South Secondary*

Maybe it is unreasonable. Maybe it is paradoxical...

I was a child once. We all were. I liked orange juice; I drank it a lot. I read books and played.

There's a gap in my memory. Sometime, during the early years of puberty, when the odd feelings started sprouting up all over our bodies, and we all became awkward and smelly, sometime, sometime, I —*we*—became so dark and dreary, so tired. But we can't remember it.

Nobody likes a cynic, ergo, nobody likes us. We are the ones who don't laugh at your jokes nor smile at your weddings. We know you don't like us, so we don't talk. The artists among us stopped drawing. The readers flip quickly through books, antsy to finish, savouring nothing, uninterested. We are silent.

Some wear it like a shield. No insults can come through to us. Your shallow observations, vapid jokes, they're nothing compared to knowing that we don't fit right with the world, that sometimes jigsaw factories can mess up and ship puzzles with extra pieces that don't connect anywhere.

We save money, too, not spending time at cafés or playing the latest games. But of course we're still limited within the constraints of space-time, however much we wish we could just skip through fortnights after fortnight. We must have something to do, so we've attached ourselves to

the easily-attainable. Online arguments, menial TV shows, books about nothing in particular. Entertainment that takes no focus, junk food for the brain. For the heart.

But the armour is too heavy for long periods. We've deteriorated. Our classmates' words are so hard to hear. Our vision is blurry; the visual stimuli from just opening our eyes is too much load for our brains to render correctly. Some of us sleep too much. Most sleep too little. Yet there is nothing discernibly wrong with us, nothing that the doctor can find.

There is guild. Talk about not getting enough exercise, eating poorly, not resting fully. It is our fault that we can't bend ourselves the right way to fit in. We aren't working hard enough, not studying, not talking, not trying, not trying, not trying, not trying.

We are tired, so tired. Other people are so shiny, so exuberant. We want to be like you, to listen to your music and find your jokes funny and go to your talent shows and experience life the way you do. I don't think we chose to be like this, and even if we did, it's not something we can undo.

Maybe it is silly to request that you listen to us, we who have nothing to say.

Maybe it is unreasonable. Maybe it is paradoxical.

## Goodbye Scott

**Doris Zhuo** *Burnaby South Secondary*

The hill stood without a single soul but me, as I sat drowning in my grief upon the sea of green. The wind was sharp and pulled and tugged on the sleeves of my cotton sweater. The cold air sliced my skin as I continued to feel a sense of loneliness. The field of daffodils waved frantically like lovers saying goodbye at train station platforms.

I wondered if there was a reason why young people died early, how good people could be taken from the world when they barely even lived it. I grew bitter at the fact that it had to be my best friend who had been taken away. The boy who knew my greatest and most vulnerable moments. The one who was there for me the first day of preschool to my college graduation. Recalling the nights of horror stories and laughter until the night was filled with speckles of the stars.

When I first heard the news four months ago, I was a mere flame of dim candlelight that had been blown out. I am nothing but a lone strand of smoke fighting its way through the suffocating air as I walk the rest of my days.

A shadow began to approach me and I shielded my eyes with my right hand as the slight glare of the sun made it hard for me to make out a figure.

The sound of footsteps became louder. I gulped as I removed my hand from my eyes and looked around me, "Scott?" No one was around. Disappointment surged through me but I knew I was being silly. My best friend was dead.

"You need to move on Connor," a voice in the distance called out softly.

"Scott? Is that you? Where are you?" I stood up and began turning in circles, frantically trying to find where the voice was coming from.

"I'm in a good place. Happy. You don't have to worry about me," I could hear the sad smile from under those words.

"I wish you were here Scott," I choked out, my voice still shaking.

"I know. But Connor, one by one we must fall into the depths of our inevitable reality. One day, if fate oversees our despair, perhaps we will meet again," the voice spoke lightly, "but until then, go climb Mount Everest, go travel to the Seven Wonders of the World like we said we would, or become a lawyer like you've always wanted. Don't stop living."

A small tear rolled down my cheek. "Okay," I whispered to the empty hilltop.

"Goodbye Connor," the voice said with a bittersweet smile.

Moments passed before I stood up, the sun peering down on me, brighter than before. I watched as the daffodils danced in the slight breeze. Trying to comprehend what just happened, whether it was real or a figment of my imagination. I closed my eyes and took a deep breath – and just for a moment, my heart felt a little lighter.

To Follow **Elsie Wang** *Burnaby North Secondary*

The humid atmosphere of Beijing's summer is almost suffocating; relentless heat of the August sun stings my skin, and gusts of hot wind blow against me as I exit the senior home with my grandparents. The modern, twenty-story building towers over me as I watch them trudge carefully down the stairs of the exit, each step slow and cautious. Clinging to each other for support, they focus their eyes on the tiles below them, looking up momentarily only to smile at me.

"Going to take a while before we make it to the restaurant!" My grandfather jokes between breaths.

Time has mapped more lines on their faces, yet their eyes sparkle with energy, and their silver hair glistens under the sun. I only visit once every few years, and this time, I still wait for them to lead the way.

~~~~~

*I followed the lead of my grandmother, who walked ahead with a dance in her step. She looked back for me, but continued to hurry to the convenience store.*

*"Suwen, we are not in a rush, the vendors will not run away." My grandfather mumbled under his breath to my grandmother as he rolled his eyes. He took my small hand in his, and walked faster. My short legs struggled to keep up, but I kept silent and quickened my pace.*

*Our walk carried on for what seemed like an eternity. Beads of sweat were rolling down my chubby cheeks, but my grandfather noticed and wiped it away gently with a napkin. He laughed, and took my hand in his again.*

~~~~~

"How could you forget your walking stick!" my grandmother suddenly yells at my grandfather, who shamefully looks away and sighs.

The demanding voice of my grandmother sends a chill down my back. At that moment, I notice the circles around their eyes, the sag in their shoulders, and the paleness of their skin. My grandparents are in their eighties; wisdom and experience shine through their spirits, but age is still physically prominent.

"It will be fine, I can manage! I am not that old." My grandfather huffs, and removes his hand that was clinging onto my grandmother's arm, "I am okay!"

My grandfather attempts to shuffle towards me, but stumbles after a few steps. He stops to straighten his back and adjust his hat, but sighs heavily. Standing awkwardly between my grandmother and I, he tilts his head to look back at my grandmother, who disappointedly stares down at her feet to avoid his gaze. Then he glances at me, and the sadness in his eyes pinches at my heart. I realize I should say something to break the tension, but I instinctively move closer to him.

Taking a deep breath, I look into his weary eyes and say, "Give me your hand, I will be your walking stick."



The Rotary Club of Burnaby would like to congratulate all those who participated in Burnaby School District's WORDS Writing Project. Improving literacy is an important goal of Rotary. The club has been a proud supporter of this project since 1995.

The Rotary Club of Burnaby works towards making a difference in the lives of those in its community. In this endeavour, the club supports a number of local initiatives that include:

- Bursaries for each of Burnaby School District's secondary schools
- Lunch programs for children
- Rotary Youth Leadership Award
- Adventure programs in citizenship, film, forestry & environment, technology and tourism
- Rotary Organized Adolescent Retreat (ROAR) that provides leadership development to a student from each of Burnaby's elementary schools
- And much more...

**You too can make a difference. Come join us!**

**Come out to one of our Friday luncheon meetings.**

**For more Information:  
[www.RotaryBurnaby.org](http://www.RotaryBurnaby.org)**



**melliferous** (mə-lif'ē-əs), *adj.* producing honey.

**mellifluous** (mə-lif'loo-əs), *n.* sweet sound; smooth flow, as of words, poetry, or a voice.

**mellifluous** (mə-lif'loo-əs), *adj.* = mellifluous. *He is a mellifluous preacher* (Newsweek). [*Late Latin mellifluus, -entis* < *mel*, mellis honey + *fluens, -entis*, present participle of *fluere* to flow] — **mellifluously**, *adv.*

**mellifluous** (mə-lif'loo-əs), *adj.* 1. smoothly flowing: *mellifluous tones*. 2. characterized by the mellifluous speech of the orator. [*Late Latin mellifluus, -entis* < *mel*, mellis honey + *fluens, -entis*, present participle of *fluere* to flow] — **mellifluously**, *adv.* — **mellifluousness**, *n.*

**mellophone** (mə-lə'fōn), *n.* a type of althorn similar to a French horn; cor. See picture under French horn. [*< mello(w) + -phone*]

**melloirine** (mə-lə'rin), *n.* an imitation ice cream in which vegetable fat replaces butterfat. [*probably < mello + -ine*]

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