

# FIRST PRIZE

## If Only . . .

We're not together,  
Although we once were.

Across the world, you lie.  
In these times, how can I come  
To see your face again?

My heart is falling once more  
Down to the pits of my stomach.  
It's lying there,  
Stuck—  
Not having the strength  
To trudge its way back up.

I'm broken shards of glass,  
Sharp when touched, and delicate too.  
My feelings are limited,  
Too stunned even to talk.

It happened too fast,  
Too quick for anyone.  
If only I could  
See you  
*Again—*  
Your warm eyes, deep laugh,  
And smiling face.

If only  
You were still breathing,  
Alive and healthy.

Everything would be fine  
If you were  
Still here.

*by Mythili Panicker* (Grade Seven)  
Charles R. Beaudoin Public School  
Burlington, Ontario

# FIRST PRIZE

## To This Day

Despite my loving home and caring family, I would find myself hiding from those who gave me the hiding spot, and as if I were possessed by a feeling and a need to run, never faced my problems but instead found a place in my mind the problem wasn't. I say their words don't hurt, but every time, they build up inside me until I have nothing left to do but explode. But when you combust, all you have left to do is pick up the pieces and put them back together, trying to fill that missing piece that you forgot under the couch with food and snacks, only to get more judged on the weight you put on to fill the hole they made. To this day, I'm still trying to repair that hole, not with food but with love and friends. To this day, I'm still figuring out why I hide and if I will ever stop.

*by Alyssa Whitfield* (Grade Eight)  
Willowbrook Public School  
Thornhill, Ontario

# SECOND PRIZE

## **I Stand Tall**

I stand tall,  
with my chin up high, up towards the sky,  
like a chirping bird  
flying along a crisp Earth coast,  
Or a sunflower growing and rising to its most.

I stand tall.  
I anchor my feet on the ground like cement,  
so that I won't let myself fall down,  
despite everything you say.

I stand tall.  
Even if your words hurt like knives,  
and even if they hurt like a stab to my soul,  
it doesn't matter, I'm still standing up.

I stand tall.  
I won't take the blame,  
I won't cry,  
I won't have any shame,  
I won't let myself play your silly, hurtful game.

I know I have my truths,  
so I sit up, and I stand tall.  
I reach out to the stars,  
and I look in front  
and to all sides.

I realize there is nothing wrong.  
I am a miracle.  
I'm proud of who I am,  
so I stand tall because I am truly amazing.

All I may ever do is  
stand tall.  
Tall is my heart,  
which beats so many times to keep me up.

There is so much depth within it all;  
therefore, I stand tall.

*by Taryn Morrison* (Grade Seven)  
CSSC Paul-Émile Mercier  
Whitehorse, Yukon

# SECOND PRIZE

## **cracks in a glittering sky**

do you remember a  
magic-filled childhood?  
the scribes of our  
own dreams, our hands were  
bursting at the seams with  
colourful creation:  
reds of passion for your teddy bear's hat,  
blues of mystery sprinkled on my frozen delight.  
the world was an endless  
colouring page, ready to be filled—  
inside or outside the lines—  
by each radiant breath of life;  
jumps and screams and smiles and laughter, vessels of  
emotion at  
every colour of the rainbow—

and yet.  
and yet, the page did end.  
the markers dried, the play date ended, and  
we each went our separate ways, a connection  
broken by a crumbling time.  
now you sit alone within the  
white walls of a cold  
office building, unable to draw breath under the  
seas of structured paper upon paper as your  
hands grasp at the colour  
your fingertips once  
painted lively.

**by Rachel Yang** (Grade Eight)  
Southridge School  
Surrey, British Columbia

# THIRD PRIZE

## Light

There is a light so bright that nothing can dim it.  
There is a light so strong that it can break the strongest gloom.  
It shines through the hardest rain and the biggest storms.  
It breaks through all darkness and dusk.  
Sometimes people forget about it, but it's always there.  
Sometimes people think they've lost it, but it's always there.

You may think that the light is vivid, but it's always vibrant.  
You may think that it doesn't exist, but it's real.  
Sometimes the light can get stronger.  
Sometimes it might flicker, but that is up to you.  
Some people lock it up, hide it away, but it still glows bright.  
Those people will always find the key, even if it takes a while; they will always see.

This light will guide you and will help you.  
It will take you on a journey of being your true self, to be your best you.  
This light is not like a light you can turn on and off.  
It's not a light that will eventually need to be changed or replaced.  
There is a light so bright that nothing can dim it.  
That light is inside you.

*by Sarah Jakob* (Grade Seven)  
Waterloo Area Enrichment Program  
Waterloo, Ontario

# THIRD PRIZE

## **Ruins of a Dream**

I stand, saluting the nation I demolished,  
The nation I created,  
The nation overtaken by the rule of a tyrant.  
Its flag, up in flames.  
Everything that once was, gone.  
I fall to my knees, hands on the ground.  
My trench coat flowing behind me.  
I am not the man I once was,  
The man in uniform,  
The revolutionary.  
I throw my head up with a laugh as my eyes widen with the realization of my situation.  
My lips widen into a smile.  
The moment I had been always questioning, pacing about, back and forth, was over.  
It was gone.  
The nation I had built, now burnt to the ground.  
My life had lost its purpose, its flare.  
I beg for death as insanity overwhelms me.  
I feel the warmth of the red liquid spread through my chest, and I succumb to the silence.  
I am now back where it started, where it all began,  
The dreary train station, where I know the train will never stop for me.

*by Rachel Malus* (Grade Eight)  
Académie Ste. Cécile International  
Windsor, Ontario