

FIRST-PRIZE WINNER

Balance

In the grey heart of the city,
ambulances wail;
a writhing crowd begins to form,
straining for a glance

of a small, twisted figure,
hanging by a thread.
People in white begin to yell.
Snip! Snip! He's gone.

A woman falls to the ground,
the sky starts to weep;
another bit of light snuffed out,
a new door opened.

In the lush green of the countryside,
there is intense strain;
a woman's face is contorted,
a man stands beside her.

Pain mixed with anticipation,
exhaustion sets in;
then a gulp of air,
and the cries of a tiny child.

A fragile being, gently caressed,
tears of joy are shed.
A fresh candle of life is lit,
keeping the balance.

Jackson Topo (Grade Seven)
Homelands Senior Public School
Mississauga, Ontario



FIRST-PRIZE WINNER

The Stalker

When the walls fall
and the red rose comes to bloom,
its thick unbreakable vines
will strangle.
So run.

Blood will soak your feet,
the breathing red water will flow
and stalk your every footstep.
The deathly scarlet seeds
will burrow beneath the dirt.
Its vines will slither up
and search,
dressing you in the red flower of war.

Storms of black will rage,
coming in rivers of rain,
willing the flower to grow.
But the crimson tears from above must stop,
must they not?

The sun,
hot and clear and bright,
hurtles through the clouds,
tucking them away.

The star will blaze,
drying up the angry rose,
turning it to ash
fluttering away
in the cool wind.

Alex Henry (Grade Eight)
Wild Rose School
Shellbrook, Saskatchewan



FIRST-PRIZE WINNER

Alleys of Orange and Gold

When the frothy frosty wind
nips at your neck
so you have to wind
your scarf and keep
your collar in check,

when the crisp lean air
catches in your eye
and wisps in your hair
like the leaves
it selects to fly,

when the chill begins to seep
the denim of your jeans, cold
hands in your pockets, deep
as you shuffle through
alleys of orange and gold,

when the puff of your
breath wafts in your face,
and you become unsure
of whether the weather should
cause you to linger or step haste,

when that awaiting cup o'
potent cider
brings a tingle to thumb and finger
and saliva to the tongue,
this is when you know to linger,
this is when your secret knows
that you can't hide 'er
no more.

Lukas Mitchell (Grade Nine)
Riverbend School
Edmonton, Alberta



FIRST-PRIZE WINNER

Clockwork Heart

I've got these dreams of you and me,
Sitting on my windowsill, just out of reach;
Taunting me through gilded bars,
Dripping oil on my clockwork heart.
Insert my key and wind me up,
Let's play pretend like we're in love.
I'll be your girl, you just be a boy,
My heart will be your windup toy.
Please, lock me up, throw away the key;
My prison's wardens are all these memories.
A broken heart serves as a prison cell,
Your smile haunts me; rest assured I'm tortured well.
My pain means nothing, I'm merely spiralling down;
My soul has been shattered, pieces never to be found.
I'm wasting my time waiting for you,
I know you're not coming; hey, there's nothing left to rescue.
A broken-down, rusty, worn-out shell?
A broken girl, barely surviving a self-inflicted hell?
I've got a hunk of scrap metal in this bloody chest,
A useless piece of machinery, only serves to make a mess.
Come on, grease my gears and restart my heart,
Gotta put me together before you tear me apart.
Cut the chains memory has used to bind my wrist,
Melt my gag of pain, lie with your kiss.
You've got the key to my clockwork heart;
Wind me up, get my veins to restart.

Kathleen Lutz (Grade Ten)
Morell Regional High School
Morell, Prince Edward Island



FIRST-PRIZE WINNER

Red-breasted Robins

In the deep thicket,
where light is lost and all is dead,
where buds don't grow in the early spring,
and where the red-breasted robins
dare not venture,
you lie
among thorns and vines
of roses that tear you away.

Where light is lost to darkness,
where bark is skin,
blood is its water,
and dirt makes you sink in
trapped, your blood slowly seeps into the ground,
and crying eyes
start to close.

It kills
as roots suck you away.
Only wish . . . your agony
would turn into grey.
Lips turn pasty and succumb to the frost.

Yet blood still flows
down dead cheeks.

'Tis a tomb,
the thicket of thorns.
Lonely, the twigs die,
the moonlight dims into darkness.

Tears flow through the decay
coming from your eyes
that won't see another day.

And the free red-breasted robins
shed their own pain
and fall to the ground
with your cold rain.

Yet you still cry,

and I still cry,

at our pain that will never go away,
at the thorns that win

as your ashes
blow us away.

Samantha Roddick (Grade Eleven)
École secondaire catholique de la Vérendrye
Thunder Bay, Ontario

FIRST-PRIZE WINNER

Swept Away

The wind that once caressed me under its wings,
now swings itself in the form of blades.
Its medic service for which I gratified,
now provokes the strongest sense of hate.

Gently dancing were trees before me;
flaunting nourishment's grant of life,
and sheltering the weary refugees,
from summer's spells of spite.

Innocently unaware of motives,
incited by breezes, far from tame,
these trees are secretly engulfed by
the wild spread of invisible flames.

And drafting a mere distraction from reality,
is the beauty of the scene ablaze,
leaving me absent-minded momentarily
of the ruins beyond the haze.

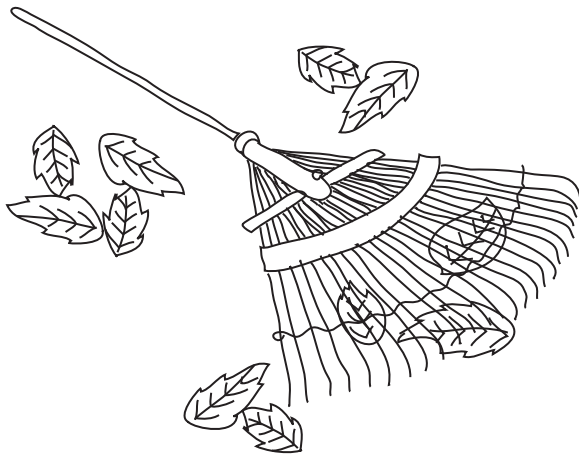
Scorched leaves gracefully surrender,
to the gravity to which they are bound.
And in my forgetful mind again,
eternally drift to the ground.

My limbs pace aimlessly,
diverging from the road,
trapped in a naïve fantasy
where elegance will continue to unfold.

But the sky will drop its watered sheets,
rotting the warmth of beauty's myth.
And flames will perish, as victims will deplete—
incapable of escaping the catalyst's kiss.

These winds make the leaves fall too fast;
autumn's deceptive display now impossible
to differentiate from a broken hourglass.
As though in time, driven is a hole. . . .
The grains of sand are no longer within my hold.

Rebecca Ong (Grade Twelve)
Albert Campbell Collegiate Institute
Scarborough, Ontario



SECOND-PRIZE WINNER

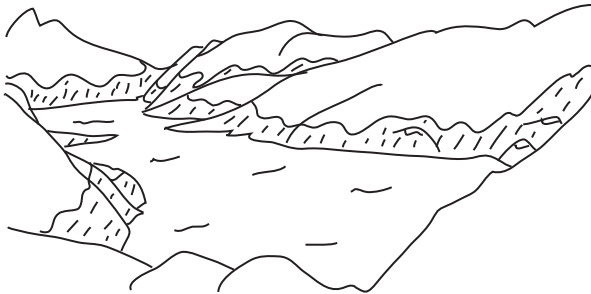
Peak District

Walking through the grass swept fields,
my cheeks turn red as the wind blows gently across my skin.
I forget everything,
my mind turns blank.
All I hear are the birds, the sheep bleating, and the wind blowing.

Sitting in a pub,
everybody is laughing and talking,
living like there is no tomorrow.
All I see are friendly chaps talking about who is going to win next.

Standing on top of a mountain,
my throat is numb.
All I can think is that in the hills,
I am surrounded by the gods.

Eric Bromley (Grade Seven)
The Sterling Hall School
Toronto, Ontario



SECOND-PRIZE WINNER

Whispers

The snow drifts slowly to the ground,
my steps fall as lightly as the snow.
I walk through constant shadows,
I am afraid.

Whispers echo through the trees,
spreading gossip, telling lies.
Their words pierce my soul,
icy bullets that shatter my heart into a thousand pieces.

They hide behind hatred and deceit,
the darkness hides their faces.
But I know that they are there,
because they are as afraid as I am.
No, because they are as afraid as I was.

They will not remain victorious—
our chains can't hold forever.
Their lies will soon die,
we will be free. . . .

Mikayla Eastman (Grade Eight)
Centennial Middle School
Georgetown, Ontario



SECOND-PRIZE WINNER

Tonight

Tonight,
I walk alone under the stars
searching, hoping,
reaching for tomorrow.

I walk through
glimmering trees
of glass,
shattered,
with no return.

I walk through
glistening plains
of tears,
frozen,
with no return.

I walk through
glittering skies
of stars,
dying,
with no return.

I walk through
glimpses so fragile
of dreams,
broken,
with no return.

Tonight,
I walk alone under the stars
searching, hoping,
reaching for something
that exists not today.

Tonight,
I lie alone under the stars,
in surrender
to a dark dreamless sleep.

Nancy Guo (Grade Nine)
Lisgar Collegiate Institute
Ottawa, Ontario

SECOND-PRIZE WINNER

Sunrise City

She tastes orange:
swirling juice perched beside the porch swing,
tangled in sweet hydrangeas.

She sees orange:
please avoid the glare of the spinning, tempered sun
as it throws daggers of light
and shoots rays of arrows.

Now orange
is magnified as it
tears through ripple-less streets,
breathes through holes that
open the gates of tinted leaves,
and glosses rumpled pavement,
polka dotted with orange.

Clicking bike rolls by, distracted;
his heightened vision dissolves in the invincible summer.
Reality crawls up the orange houses,
enlightening lovers
in a maze of crystalline sheets.
Crescendos of yawns arouse a city.
It is morning.

Kathy Wang (Grade Ten)
Semiahmoo Secondary School
Surrey, British Columbia



SECOND-PRIZE WINNER

Death by Dusk

Captured within texts,
immobilized by love and hate,
your fault tainted me, hexed!
Come dawn shall be too late.

Rough hands and malevolent power will conquer,
upon innocent, mercy hath not perched.
Death by dusk will creep and saunter
what beautiful disaster this war hath searched!

Generations have fought and yet we fight.
A paradox is what hate made peace,
fighting for peace, together isn't right,
and from actions present, it won't cease.

Land
 cascaded
 by
 tainted
 blood. . . .

What horrid fate greed made occur,
from loss, vengeance may bud,
and the vile future will become a blur.

Kaylene Pritchett (Grade Eleven)
Smallwood Academy
Gambo, Newfoundland



SECOND-PRIZE WINNER

In the Twilight Kingdom

Last night I walked to where
the sky train stops.
Last night I slept in plastic compost heaps
and got all wrapped up in the fire pump.
Last night I fell down a cement well
and got all tangled up in fate.
Last night the shy moon went sheepishly into that good night
and danced with wild stars.
Last night I sank into the circus sands
in the Jingle-Jangle hour;
he not busy being worn is busy crying.
Last night I saw the white dove sail
despite the word of God.
Last night I read of the human war
despite the hands of God.
Last night the blind man lowered his head to the blows of the rain
where love has all the dominion.
Last night the broken man left bleeding and naked,
Pagliacci painted red.
Last night I was shot with a sonnet
and I bled all over pity and despair.
Last night old age was impregnated
and given new life;
he not busy being adorned is busy trying.
Last night I saw Ferlinghetti in his underwear
reading from the Koran.
Last night I watched the library burn and flake away
and stood amazed by the crowd
Last night I passed a man who'd sold his eyes to fatalism,
the hollow sockets echoing the wind.
Last night I romanticized death abstractly
remembering Phlebas, forgetting the sea.
Last night I overheard poetry drown in the gutters
explained: *Pro Patria Mori*.
Last night I watched the best-laid dreams
of mousy man go awry.
Last night I got all
caught up in it; he not busy being mourned is busy living.
Don't shout, I'm sleeping now.

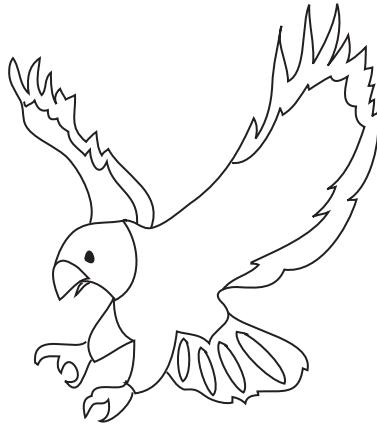
Benjamin Boswell (Grade Twelve)
Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School
Vancouver, British Columbia

THIRD-PRIZE WINNER

Nature's Way

Sunlight creeps on the morning forest ground.
Blazing leaves storm the dense forest.
Eagles ascend up to the sky.
Splintered trees crackle as they collapse to the earth.
The wind whistles through bristle branches.
Fallen pine cones dance in the breeze.
Rapid bullets roar between trees.
Blood rushes through the veins of creatures.
Clouds pile under the sun.
Nature calms slowly into the shaded dark.

Jana Dyck (Grade Seven)
Hudson Bay Composite High School
Hudson Bay, Saskatchewan



THIRD-PRIZE WINNER

I Love You

I am bad at math,
but I can calculate how much I love you.

I am terrible at geography,
but I remember where you live.

I don't understand English,
but I succeed in saying "I love you."

I don't write well in French,
but your nickname I write without mistakes.

Fine arts are incomprehensible,
but your face is a true work of beauty.

I am bad in sports,
but I shall always run for you.

I know nothing of history,
but I know that ours will be for eternity.

Meagan Gariepy (Grade Eight)
École secondaire du Verbe Divin
Granby, Québec



THIRD-PRIZE WINNER

Watching Me Watching You

I see you watching me watching you.
Cold bites at my exposed skin.
Face frozen, hands stiff,
slit eyes stuck on your face,
keeper of the night,
the example of loneliness
never to disappear.

I see you watching me watching you.
The lake paints a watercolour picture of above,
blurring at the edges,
distorted by the slight ripples—
ripple going into ripple,
spreading slowly like molasses.

I see you watching me watching you.
The wolf howls,
the loon calls,
her charm so seductive,
prisoners of the night,
their mournful sounds
build and fall, creep and crawl,
collecting a slow shiver up my spine.

I see you watching me watching you.
Everybody else in a dream,
searching through their unconscious minds,
not knowing what they might see.

Sleep fails me, leaving me in the dark,
awake,
face frozen,
hands stiff,
eyes slit, forever stuck on your face.

Abigail Cowan (Grade Nine)
L.V. Rogers Secondary School
Nelson, British Columbia



THIRD-PRIZE WINNER

A Lovely Curse

Is it fair if you cut yourself
that I'm the one to bleed?
And if you were to trip or stumble,
I'd fall down in your stead?
Is it fair that when you are sick
my fever starts to climb?
I start to cough, to sneeze, to sweat
when I really should be fine.
It's quite unjust that if you were
troubled, hurt, or sad,
I'd be the one weeping—
oh what a potent curse I have!
I should not have to feel your pain,
your trouble, ache, and loss.
Why must my teeth be falling out
should you forget to floss?
I know exactly who's to blame
for why I feel like I do;
it's terribly inconsiderate
to keep making me love you.

Aaron Hegazi (Grade Ten)
Belle River District High School
Belle River, Ontario



THIRD-PRIZE WINNER

... Through ...

Give me the gift of life,
I am the scarlet angel,
bleeding under your nails.
Pull me closer through this wall,
and I will be able to stand tall,
broken and bruised,
shattered beneath the light.
The dust cut up and scattered,
my heart taking its last breath,
the total dark shining through;
all I ever see is you.
Oh, my dear, can't you see?
No one really cares.
Hopeless romantics chained together,
like a snow-white withering feather.
Drink in the wrath and pour out the sin,
a sea of fire you'll soon be in.
Crawl through this never-ending space,
sit down and begin to erase.
Blindness covers all,
until they decide to fall.
Tall and thin and sinking in,
this race none will ever win.

Jocelyn Baranowski (Grade Eleven)
F.J. Brennan High School
Windsor, Ontario



THIRD-PRIZE WINNER

Solar System Encased (In Case)

Nova-esque, though motionless, we were, as we lay,
a black-hole's excuse to suck up the sound.
With our darkened, air-fueled limbs floating off;
it was difficult to continue holding on to you.
Each subsequent solar flare on horizon does
signal another rotation where we move,
and you simply hold, colourless, still.
Scheduled to burst, we are vacant stars
knowing of our own obtuse emissions
of rocket fuel for moon-based travel.
If my tongue could pull apart its ties,
I'd admit to the faults that you once had;
craters upon your personality I
wish I could have named off to you,
because now you're a stainless, porcelain sheen
upon a sky which I remember. Together, under,
we'd find formations of lights, in forms
of all our embryotic dreams, so young.
Unlike a star, far from my vision, I could
see you weren't perfect, and instead of
a grand explosion, all you did was fade
away, leaving me a singularity,
my lips collapsed within themselves.

Dylan Sealy (Grade Twelve)
Bathurst High School
Bathurst, New Brunswick

