

# FIRST PRIZE

## Ocean

The gleaming water glistens in the rays of the sun.  
As the waves crash onto the shore,  
My eyes dance, looking at the habitat before me.  
I see the playful dolphins jumping in and out of the shining water  
And the reef, home to exuberant varieties of beings,  
Safe from the marauders of the sea.  
The seagull screeches and plunges into the water,  
Carrying its victim in its beak as it resurfaces.  
I look deeper into the salty water that stings my eyes,  
And I see the looming shark swim after its prey,  
Its jaws ready to snap at the slightest movement.  
Going deeper still, I find the lonely angler fish,  
Using its light to lure fish into its deadly trap.  
As I rise to the surface once more,  
I realize that there is no equal to the beauty before me.

*by Aaron Berg* (Grade Six)  
The Enrichment Centre  
Cambridge, Ontario

# FIRST PRIZE

## A Tongue of Silver

I spent ten years learning each word,  
Then flew to China to be heard.  
I arrived and took the first taxi  
And told the driver I wanted to see

The good president's daughter,  
Which sent him into gales of laughter.  
But insist I did, and he agreed in a way,  
So I met the president and did try to say,

"Here is the ruler of this great land  
From one end's mountains to the other's sands,  
Whose heart is gold, whose soul is bold.  
Good sir, I do ask to be told,

"Is life treating you well and good,  
As it always, always, always should?"  
My tongue did slip and in a knot it did tie.  
Before long, things had gone awry.

"My dear good sir," I did say,  
"Where is your bear fur shoe today?  
His majesty, who is well in liver and good in leg  
And who has a royal crown and egg,

"Who lets his turkey sit in his lap  
And enjoys having a carpet with him to nap."  
The good man's daughter aloud did cry,  
"How dare you insult like this and try

"To make fools of all good man and kind?  
Indeed, this one is an unlucky find!"  
My dear friend later said to me, "More time you must use  
If bonds and friendships you desire to fuse.

"A high, high wall stands between you and them,  
And of a flower, you have only the stem.  
Much you must learn, but it can be done.  
I wish you much luck, and I wish you much fun!"

*by Kailian Blohm* (Grade Seven)  
Home School  
Camlachie, Ontario

# FIRST PRIZE

## Midnight Mulberries

Mid-summer heat fills the sweaty, thick breeze,  
I reach up on tiptoes to grasp at the air.  
With my purple-stained feet dug into the warm earth,  
I jump and I twirl to reach my sweet, plump goal.  
The ones on the ground squish under my feet,  
the ones in the air hang tauntingly.  
In one lucky jump, I catch on a branch,  
and a shower of juicy, sweet treats falls on me.  
I open my mouth to catch even one  
of the thousands and thousands that seem to trickle down . . .  
and one falls in, the best of them all—  
the biggest, the juiciest, and ripest that I've ever seen.  
It explodes in my mouth, like a breath of fresh air,  
it's juicy and bubbly, it's superb.  
It tastes like a party that's full of your friends  
who tell you their deepest, darkest secrets with no care.  
The taste is addicting, it lures me in,  
each one that I eat makes me want more.  
I stuff and I munch, and I scarf down  
berry after berry, staining my white shirt,  
but this does not matter, not to me,  
because the berries' rich taste is enticing.  
With a belly full of a warm, sweet weight,  
my clothes uncomfortably tight, a face smeared with a purple grin,  
I stroll home, thinking to myself how no one would guess  
that I had been under the mulberry tree tonight.

*by Lauren Morrison* (Grade Eight)  
Lakeroad Public School  
Sarnia, Ontario

# SECOND PRIZE

## Marathons in War

*This poem takes place during World War II.  
It is through the eyes of a girl who lost her family to the Nazis.  
She is pushed forward by the sight of her sister's last smile.*

I'm running, racing nearly out of breath,  
But I won't stop, for help is closer with each step.  
My family is gone, I'm not lost but I'm alone.  
I wish I could go back to the place I once called home.

As the memories flood in, my heart fills with woe;  
Though now, it's impossible to tell who's friend or foe.  
I stop, and it all comes back in a flash,  
All mixed emotions—enough to stop my mad dash.

The first sign was against my father, a successful yet humble man:  
Robbed, then beaten, found on the street, on his chest a metal can.  
On the can, was a sign so black, red, and bright.  
When my mother saw this, it took her smile that could light a thousand lights.

Later, I learned it was all because he was a Jew.  
I wondered why my parents didn't tell me, for I was sure they knew.  
One by one, memories flood in.  
As I recall their deaths, I realize these "Nazis" have committed great sins.

It all happened so fast, I didn't know what to do;  
I was joyful coming home from the fields; in my hand, my worn-out shoes.  
A little while away, I froze and hid in the trees, chiding myself with a "hush."  
I saw my family herded out like animals in a rush.

My sister's eyes locked with mine, she nodded then gave me a smile;  
A secret that I'll always keep, I won't forget it in a while.  
I turned around, dropped my shoes, and began to run;  
Faster and faster I went, for I knew my war would soon be won.

I'm running, racing nearly out of breath,  
But I won't stop, for help is closer with each step.

*by Abigail Thomas* (Grade Six)  
St. Matthew Catholic Elementary School  
Waterloo, Ontario

# SECOND PRIZE

## Winter's Gift

Spring turns to Summer, Summer fades to Fall,  
And with each cycle, the trees have become tall.  
All the plants and flowers grow beautiful in Spring,  
And Summer brings warmth, such a wonderful thing.  
Fall turns the leaves red, orange, and yellow,  
Then they float to the ground, old and mellow.  
But Winter is harsh . . . and icy . . . and cold;  
It's very hard to see what good it could hold.  
The wet, cold snow can be found in every place,  
And outside, the icy wind whips at your face.  
The only thing that Winter brings is sickness and misery,  
And it will surely be this way until the end of history.  
That's what most people think, but they don't understand  
All the good that Winter brings when it comes to our land.  
It allows the ground to rest under a blanket of snow  
And makes sure Spring is ready when Winter has to go.  
Although Winter can be harsh, it also can be gentle,  
And the sicknesses it carries is always accidental.  
The snowflakes that float gently from the clouds to the ground  
Are like Winter's version of stars—that always stay around.  
Maybe we should wish on them just like we wish on the stars,  
Because unlike the stars, maybe snowflakes can keep ours.  
Maybe Winter is sad that we turn away  
And await another sunny Spring and Summer day.  
We already have happy Spring, Summer, and Fall,  
So why does Winter get no praise at all?  
The beauty of Winter is always left in the dark,  
Never has the chance to make its mark.  
Every time Winter comes, people just don't see  
The small, fragile snowflakes falling silently.  
Because no matter how many of us believe all the lies,  
Winter's been giving us a gift all this time.

*by Abigail Dixon* (Grade Seven)  
Enrichment Area Class  
Waterloo, Ontario

# SECOND PRIZE

## **Mother, Where Are You?**

I hear your sorrowful sobs from the hall,  
Mother, I am here.

I feel your pain radiating off your body,  
Mother, I am here.

I see your eyes, empty of joy,  
Mother, I am here.

I smell the meal we could not eat because no one was there,  
Mother, I am here.

I see the dark bags weighing down your face,  
Mother, I am here.

I touch your hands, rough from work,  
Mother, I am here.

I hold you tight, body shaking from exhaustion,  
Mother, I am here.

I hear you screaming at him not to go,  
Mother, I am here.

I think of you; you raised me, helped me become who I am today,  
Mother, I am still here.

But I can't see you like this, the person I look up to, slowly crumbling apart,  
Mother,  
I am gone.

*by Jackie Eibisch* (Grade Eight)  
Jesse Ketchum Public School  
Toronto, Ontario

# THIRD PRIZE

## Chores

I'll do my chores, I'll do my chores,  
I'll dust the furniture and mop the floor.  
I'll vacuum the carpets and clean my room,  
I'll freshen the air and use the broom.

I'll water the garden and pick the weeds,  
I'll mow the lawn and plant the seeds.  
I'll rake the leaves and rotten berries,  
I'll feed the birds and pick the cherries.

I'll grocery shop for all the food,  
I'll cook and bake all that I could.  
I'll prepare the meals and serve the tea,  
I'll wash the dishes and dry them clean.

I'll do the chores, to keep the house clean,  
It will be cleaner than you've ever seen.  
But if you ask me, our house is doomed,  
We really should move elsewhere soon.

You said my friends can come over, they may,  
You said it yourself the other day.  
All of my friends are a tornado,  
They'll destroy the house in just one blow.

But do not worry, I'm not alone,  
My sister's friends are a cyclone.

*by Annie Dang* (Grade Six)  
Blue Willow Public School  
Woodbridge, Ontario

# THIRD PRIZE

## Goalies

We are  
the ones who  
stop pucks, the  
ones on the team  
who don't get  
noticed for what  
we do. Goalies have  
the most difficult job, having  
to do everything in their power to  
make that save. When their team loses,  
they get blamed for the loss, but when  
their team wins the game, they never get much  
credit for their contribution to winning that game. We are the  
ones who are lonely at the other end of the rink. We only have the posts,  
until the play comes back in our zone. Being a goalie is much more than  
just stopping pucks. We are waiting there like tigers, ready to pounce on  
the puck. Goalies have to mentally prepare for a game, they have to think  
going to do. They picture themselves in the net, making  
saves, saying in their mind, *How am I going to make  
that save? What will I have to do?* The goalie's goal  
is to not let the players get theirs. When goalies make  
a big save, they destroy the other team's momentum.  
We are the ones who stand between the pipes, the  
players who are the last line of defence. We are  
never okay until every shot is saved. Every save  
gives us more confidence. Every time a goal goes in,  
we learn more, and say, "How will I make that save  
next time?" Goalies have to focus on the puck, not  
the player. If the player takes you one way, but  
the puck is in the same spot, that is a goal right  
there. We are the only ones who are denying  
players exactly what they want most: a goal.  
We are the ones who never give up on a puck,  
the ones who don't get noticed for what  
we do on the ice. We are the ones  
who stop pucks.

by **Raziq Devraj** (Grade Seven)  
Balmoral School  
Calgary, Alberta



# THIRD PRIZE

## Delhi, Day One

Once a year we pack our suitcases,  
And with a sense of wonder, we visit some place,  
One we haven't been before.  
This year, we chose India to explore!

We arrived in Delhi late at night,  
The city was still up, vibrant and bright.  
Dinner was delicious, fit for a king.  
From butter chicken to burfee, this was the real thing!

The next morning, we left on a tour  
With our guide, Mukesh, a person so pure.  
As we strolled through the sights of new and old,  
I swear I saw his heart of gold!

By midday, the place felt like an oven,  
My mum shopped for sarees; I think she bought a dozen.  
While we stopped for a break and sipped on chai tea,  
My sister asked if there would be a tiger to see!

We went through Chandni Chowk on a rickshaw ride,  
The rich colours and culture left me wide-eyed.  
There were buses, bikes, camels, and cows.  
The bumper-to-bumper traffic raised my eyebrows!

My mind stretched to take it all in.  
This was like nowhere I'd ever been!  
It was only day one, just the start,  
And already, India had a place in my heart!

*by Nekhil Govender* (Grade Eight)  
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