

# FIRST PRIZE

## **The Sun Still Shines during War**

The Sun still shines during war.  
The Sun is bright, and the sky is blue,  
Even if the people are covered in gloom.

But even on happy days, sometimes the Sun is not here to stay.  
Oh, where does the Sun go?  
Is it sleeping on days of snow?  
Or on rainy days, do the Sun and the Moon go out to play?

Oh, imagine if the Sun could sit with me by the bush and the cherry tree  
And tell me of the things that it has seen.  
The Sun could have seen a gorgeous lake  
Or someone blowing out candles on their birthday cake.  
She could tell me of the sorrow she's had when she sees men and women who are oh so sad  
Or of the joy she felt when little Jake's ice-cream cone did not melt.

But no matter what the Sun has seen,  
The Sun just keeps on shining.  
I don't think that it has ever stopped before,  
But no matter what the day is like,  
The Sun still shines during war.

**by Lemon Green** (Grade 6)  
Canyon Falls Middle School  
Kelowna, British Columbia

# FIRST PRIZE

## Lost in Words

I'm afraid—  
afraid of hurtful words,  
judgement,  
teasing,  
bullying.

I want to talk,  
to communicate.  
But words won't come out.  
My kind, gentle words,  
they can't come out.

The world's full—  
full of harsh words,  
disrespect,  
cruelty,  
pain.

I want to talk,  
to communicate,  
But the words won't come out.  
My supportive, soft words,  
they can't come out.

I'm tired—  
tired of wounding words,  
impolite people,  
greedy people,  
terrible people.

I want to stop,  
to stop myself.  
But they come out.  
My hurtful, harsh words,  
they always come out.

*by Vivienne Le* (Grade 7)  
Summit Middle School  
Coquitlam, British Columbia

# FIRST PRIZE

## Tiny Deaths

When I would go to your house,  
you would always comment  
on how much I'd grown.  
You'd reminisce about when I was little,  
and you'd wonder where the time has gone.

Have you ever stopped to consider  
that I wonder what time has done to you too?  
How you don't take me to the park,  
hold my small hand while I walk upstairs,  
or play Barbies with me.  
How you no longer kick me a ball  
and cheer when I stop it with my tiny foot.

Now, I am a teenager, bewitched  
by slang and strange interests.  
I am not five years old anymore—  
that little girl has been lost to one of life's tiny deaths.  
Yet, I am still inherently me.  
I'm still the me who would rather play with you  
than suffer an awkward embrace  
and the long silences that ensue.

So maybe, the tiny death also took you—  
the you that took me to the park,  
the you that held my hand up the stairs  
or kicked the ball, eager for me to return it.  
Maybe we have both suffered tiny deaths  
and are grieving the person  
we thought the other to be.

*by Anna Komar* (Grade 8)  
Cunard Junior High School  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

# SECOND PRIZE

## **The Peace**

When the world is violent,  
I am there—  
ever silent.

When there is just war,  
I am there—  
watching, sitting by the shore.

For when there is no quiet conversation,  
I am there—  
not saying a single accusation.

I am the fold, the crease.  
I am there,  
I am the peace.

*by Macie Wong* (Grade 6)  
Our Lady of Fatima School  
Coquitlam, British Columbia

# SECOND PRIZE

## Once More

Your soft padding paws tiptoe  
over my dinkies and blocks.  
You are a giant, towering over that tiny world,  
but you never destroy it—  
so careful that anyone would think  
you'd spent hours building that town yourself.

You are James Bond in your tuxedo,  
your shaggy fur faded from endless days  
of lying in the Sun.  
Your bright green eyes are fireflies in the night,  
darting as you watch the chickadees  
swoop and sing outside.

Your pink nose sniffs,  
as a breeze drifts through the air.  
Maybe you caught a whiff of the tuna  
Mom is putting in the casserole.  
I make a note to give you the leftovers.

Now, I glance at your dusty black collar  
draped loosely over the wooden angel statue  
on the dusty piano.  
The tag with the little silver paw  
glistens in the light.

You're gone, and my heart aches.  
I want to feel your warmth in my arms  
once more.

*by Ruby Langley* (Grade 7)  
Cunard Junior High School  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

# SECOND PRIZE

## Clouded with Grief

To the ordinary eye,  
it's a singular  
tear-shaped necklace,  
a shiny trinket.

For me,  
this teardrop  
holds the ashes  
of a past life,  
the burned remains  
of someone I barely knew.

This man, this father,  
shot and reduced to ash  
when I was only three.  
I barely understood  
the concept of death  
but even then, I knew  
that he was never coming back.

Now, eleven years later,  
I still wonder  
what he was like and who he was.  
My mind is clouded with grief,  
yet I carry his ashes  
around my neck  
to keep his memory  
close.

*by Marshall Tucker-Hebb* (Grade 8)  
Cunard Junior High School  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

# THIRD PRIZE

## **Stress to Success**

Have to be best,  
No time for rest.  
Ninety, no less,  
Or I'll shut down.

Handed back tests,  
I'm always stressed.  
Weight on my chest,  
Nervous breakdowns.

There's no life vest.  
I do detest  
So much distress.  
I cannot frown.

Let me address,  
It's like a guess.  
Nagging requests,  
About to drown.

Grades aren't just blessed—  
Time, I invest.  
It's a whole quest,  
Can't have meltdowns.

*by Alyssa Tong* (Grade 6)  
Unionville College  
Markham, Ontario

# THIRD PRIZE

## **The Feeling of Winter**

The cold wind empties my lungs.  
I can feel the freezing wind nipping at my back.  
A winter storm is on the way.  
My heart beats loudly.  
I can feel it,  
The feeling of Winter.

I trudge up the stairs.  
Tiny ice crystals sparkle on the cold ground  
As my fingers melt the frosty window.  
My heart beats loudly.  
I can feel it,  
The feeling of Winter.

Walking out the door,  
Snowflakes swirling around me,  
I can scarcely keep in a scream of excitement.  
My heart beats loudly.  
I can feel it,  
The feeling of Winter.

Day after day, drifts pile up.  
Tunnels are dug,  
And forts are built.  
My heart beats,  
But I can't feel it.  
The feeling of winter is lost.

Then, as seasons pass,  
Spring, Summer, Fall . . .  
I can feel the freezing wind nipping at my back.  
My heart beats loudly.  
I can feel it again,  
The feeling of Winter.

*by Cassidy Wollmann* (Grade 7)  
Silverwinds School  
Sperling, Manitoba



# THIRD PRIZE

## Succumbing

Pulp to page—white, pristine.  
It falls.  
Edges smoke, then blacken, curling in—  
succumbing.

Opportunity tarnished.  
Creativity blackened.  
Hopefulness burned.  
Ideation rendered impossible.

You write, we burn.  
You dream, we destroy.  
You draw worlds, we founder them.  
You speak out, we *change the molecular structure*.

Pencil to paper,  
words and pictures marching,  
taking a stand, over the blankness, brilliant white.  
Billions of people, words, sketches, a tapestry, woven from dreams and hopes for humanity.

Impossible to erase, written in pen and marker and ink and blood.  
So overpowering, so unprecedented, so inconceivable to ignore.  
Threatening the system, toppling over.  
The only solution? To *change the molecular structure*.

Thrown into fire, lying there, white against the black.  
Marked with the words of the citizens of the planet, screaming, defiant.  
The match is lit. A spark shines. A flame grows. A blaze erupts. A fire takes hold,  
the silence of the Witching Hour interrupted by the crackling, hissing, screaming.

As the paper disintegrates to dust, as the ashes fall, as the hopes of billions of people die,  
the Earth blackens with it.  
Overtaking paper, hearts, cities, a rage leaving nothing behind, not even those who lit the flame.  
An irreversible change.

Pulp to page—white, pristine.  
It falls.  
Edges smoke, then blacken, curling in—  
succumbing.

**by Amelia Pletsch** (Grade 8)  
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