



**Young Poets of Delaware County  
Contest Winners, 2020  
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**Avery Fisher  
Grade 1  
Pennell Elementary  
Penn-Delco School District  
First Place**

**Ocean City**  
By: Avery Fisher

Wshhhhhhhhhhh!  
Gentle waves rolling in and out.  
Boats bobbing up and down.  
Up and down,  
Up and down,  
Seagulls circle overhead.  
Squawk, squawk!  
Sun glitters like magic on the water.  
Seashells shine like gems in the water.  
The warm yellow sand toasts my toes.  
The beach is my favorite place!

**Emilia DiSantis  
Grade 1  
Worrell Elementary School  
Marple Newtown School District  
Second Place**

## **Dogs**

Dogs, dogs everywhere  
Lots of people come to stare  
Small dogs, big dogs  
Everybody loves and cares  
Everybody should love dogs, isn't that true?  
Everybody should treat dogs like they are YOU!

**Maeve Lichtenstein  
Grade 1  
Pennell Elementary  
Penn-Delco School District  
Third Place**

### **Fireworks**

Crackle, POP!  
Blue sparkles light up the sky.  
They sprinkle down.  
Then...BOOM!  
Another one!  
Gold sizzles in the sky.  
Turning night to day,  
Then fading away.  
Summer is the time for fun,  
Next year there will be another one.

**Julianne Kelly  
Grade 2  
Worrell Elementary School  
Marple Newtown School District  
First Place**

### **The Enchanted Walk**

I walk through crunching leaves.  
Sun beams seep into the tender and whispering trees  
I smell a sugary, maple scent  
My hair flows  
Dancing in the breezy wind  
I feel the damp grass as I walk beside my pony as soft as cotton candy  
Up, up  
I'm flying on my pony into the clouds  
I touch the foggy, fluffy clouds  
I fly farther landing on a soft, flowery meadow  
I lie down and wake with a big smile  
I wish I could have this dream again

**Madeline Murdolo  
Grade 2  
Sacred Heart Academy (Radnor)  
Rose Tree Media School District  
Second Place**

### **America**

America is my home.

I can look at the stars from the fluffy grass.

I can look at America from the sky and see how beautiful it is.

I have love for my home.

America is the best place to live.

We speak a language that is so special.

It makes me happy that I'm here and not somewhere far.

I'm happy at home.

America yes, I love you so.

And the soft sand at the edge, oh that soft feeling sends me down to sleep.

**Colin Owen  
Grade 2  
Notre Dame de Lourdes  
Ridley School District  
Third Place**

**Spring**

A pretty sunny day,  
Beautiful and calming,  
Walking around,  
Smelling the beautiful flowers,  
Looking at the sun,  
Spring

**Evelyn Berrodin  
Grade 3  
Homeschool Student  
First Place**

### **The Aurora Lights**

The aurora lights are swaying through the sky.  
Up and down like a wave,  
round and round like a clown's game.  
Spurt of colors flowing through the sky....  
red, pink, green and blue.  
Skipping across the night sky like children playing tag.  
Shooting stars cut through the aurora lights like a knife cuts through an orange.  
That is why you must take care,  
because colors are flying everywhere!

**Diya Iyer  
Grade 3  
Indian Lane Elementary School  
Rose Tree Media School District  
Second Place**

### **My Family**

We are a Family of Four  
Where everyone has a Chore

My Brother is small and lean  
But sometimes, he can be a bit mean  
He snatches the remote when I am watching TV  
So I yell, "Hey...give it back to me"

Playing with my dad is a lot of fun  
He is good with card tricks and also makes puns  
It seems like my Dad is always on the go  
But if you watch closely, he is quite slow

My mom works long hours and is often gone  
And she loves to shop on Amazon  
Every morning, she helps me with my hair  
"Ouch it hurts. Hey mom...do you care"

I love to read past midnight  
In dim bedroom light  
Everyone says that I have a heart of gold  
But I wish I was a little more bold

This is my family, now you know  
Next time you see us, won't you say Hello!

**Aleena Josekuty**  
**Grade 3**  
**Amosland Elementary School**  
**Ridley School District**  
**Third Place**

### **Beautiful Spring**

Do you know about Beautiful Spring?  
It makes you feel like dancing and singing  
People are singing, while doorbells are ringing  
Giving out presents on Beautiful Spring

Flowers are blooming with pretty petals  
Birds are chirping tales of their travel  
Everyone is happy because it is Beautiful Spring.

Painting rocks and making rock smiley faces  
Picking flowers and trying your laces  
Having a smile on your face because it is Beautiful Spring.

I am jumping up, doing backflips and having fun  
While my friend is sipping lemonade, away from the sun  
My life is great because it is Beautiful Spring.

Looking up in to the bright sky,  
Wondering how great my life is,  
Doing cartwheels, reading a story  
I am having an amazing day under this bright sun.  
The children are playing, the pets are joining  
With lots of cheer and delight  
I love when it is time for Beautiful Spring.

**Molly Foreman  
Grade 4  
Homeschool  
Chester Upland School District  
First Place**

**I can't write a poem**

I can't write a poem  
Or at least not today  
In a year or a month  
Not in any way

My hand is crumpled  
My thumb is inflated  
In fact it's blowing up  
And might be amputated

I have pains  
Shooting up my arm  
It's getting so bad  
I'm rather alarmed

My hand is limp  
I can't feel a thing  
Is that a splinter  
I see that is stinging?!

My brain has popped  
I can't think at all  
I can't write a poem  
Not at all

My hands are so tired  
Wait, what did you say?  
Draw a penguin?  
Wow! I'll do it today!

**Danica Linsky**  
**Grade 4**  
**Scenic Hills Elementary School**  
**Springfield School District**  
**Second Place**

## **Purple**

Purple.  
Purple is a coral reef in the sea  
An allium in the field,  
A fruit in a garden.  
Purple is nature.

Purple is a glistening amethyst,  
A sunset at dusk,  
A royal throne.  
Purple is beauty.

Purple is a velvet rose,  
A symbol of romance,  
A firework with a full moon.  
Purple is love  
Purple.

**Naomi Fairwell  
Grade 4  
Glenwood Elementary School  
Rose Tree Media School District  
Third Place**

### **Hot Dog Love**

Hot dogs, A pleasant bun that gives meat a hug  
Hot dogs, Sometimes they're so chewy you need to give them a teathy tug  
Hot dogs, The ketchup is red like a loving heart  
Hot dogs, they never taste tart  
Hot dogs, romance burning on a grill  
Hot dogs, they make your life a thrill  
Hot dogs, they make life complete  
Hot dogs, they are so sweet  
Hot dogs, they have love  
Hot dogs, they are more beautiful than a dove  
Hot dogs, they make life  
Hot dogs, you don't even need a knife

I love hot dogs through thick and thin  
I love hot dogs more than sky blue  
I love hot dogs in a tin  
I love hot dogs because I can chew

**April Kim  
Grade 5  
Glenwood Elementary School  
Rose Tree Media School District  
First Place**

### **Don't Look Behind You**

It is night, and you are terrified.  
“Don't look behind you.”  
She soothes and soothes and soothes you.  
“Don't look behind you.”  
You can almost feel the claws raking down on your back.  
“Don't look behind you.”  
You curl up in bed.  
Don't look behind you.  
You suddenly feel a need for your mother.  
Don't....look....behind...you.....  
You feel eyes burning into the back of your head.  
Don't look behind you.  
You can't help it and you...  
Don't look behind you.  
.....look behind you.  
Don't look behind you.  
You scream.  
It roars.  
And everything is black.  
You wished you hadn't looked behind you.

**Teagan Moyer**  
**Grade 5**  
**Garnet Valley Elementary**  
**Garnet Valley School District**  
**Second Place**

## **I Wonder**

I sometimes lie in bed,  
And wonder,  
About things that give me nightmares.  
About things that give me pains.  
About what would it be like  
If I wasn't the lead in the story.

I sometimes walk to class,  
And wonder.  
About things that I may fail.  
About things that give me doubt.  
About what would it be like  
If I wasn't the lead in the story.

I sometimes spend my night at home,  
And wonder.  
About things that make me second best.  
About things that make me not as good as the rest.  
About what would it be like  
If I wasn't the lead in the story.

I sometimes end my day,  
And wonder.  
About things that are good in life  
About things that make me happy.  
About what it is like  
To be the lead in the story.

**Brendan Dougherty  
Grade 5  
Indian Lane Elementary School  
Rose Tree Media School District  
Third Place**

**F-**

My teacher gave me an F-  
Maybe because I copied off the test that belonged to Linus  
Or maybe because I spit water  
Or because I hit the teacher's daughter  
Or maybe because I called Bobby lame  
Or maybe because I threw a toy train  
Or maybe because I broke the school's clock  
Or because I knocked down Joe's stack of blocks  
Maybe my parents will be glad  
Uh-Oh time to run looks they're mad

**Maggie Wesnoski  
Grade 6  
E.T. Richardson Middle School  
Springfield School District  
First Place**

### **Listening Ears**

I talk,  
Yet you don't listen.  
I speak,  
Without a voice.

I whisper,  
Yet not even the wind hears.  
I am using my vocal chords.  
Use your listening ears.

I ask,  
Yet no one answers.  
I interfere,  
But I am cut off.

I yell,  
Yet it results in tears.  
I am speaking out,  
But you do not use your listening ears.

I scream,  
Yet I am not heard.  
I shout,  
Just to tell one word.

I cry out,  
Yet you make it clear.  
You will never listen  
With your listening ears.

I need help,  
Yet I am ignored.  
I am performing,  
Without an audience.

I need attention,  
To guide me through my years.  
I need you,  
To use your listening ears.

**Eshal Abid  
Grade 6  
Garnet Valley Middle School  
Garnet Valley School District  
Second Place**

### **Painting Life**

What is life?

Life is an art gallery.  
Each blank canvas is  
a new opportunity,  
waiting to be taken on.  
Painted on.

Sometimes we sketch in pencil  
before painting.  
Sometimes we don't

Life is an art gallery.  
Each color is a feeling,  
an emotion.

Sometimes we create colorful paintings  
with different emotions,  
red and green,  
yellow and purple,  
blue and orange.

Sometimes we create paintings  
with similar colors,  
similar emotions,  
red and purple,  
yellow and orange,  
blue and green.

Life is an art gallery.  
Each stroke is an action,  
a choice  
a decision.

Sometimes we paint each stroke carefully,  
Thinking about the consequences,  
How it would affect the next stroke,  
the painting.

Sometimes we just paint the strokes  
without thinking, going through  
each consequence,  
its effect on everything else.

Things like the painting

Life is an art gallery.  
Each finished artwork,  
each masterpiece,  
is a new experience,  
an event marked in our lives.

Sometimes we're content with our art,  
our choices.  
Our paintings grin at us with the pleasure  
of good decisions.

We love our new artwork, neat and filled  
with bright colors,  
positive actions,  
an addition to the gallery.

Sometimes

we don't like our art,  
our experience,  
because there are mistakes,  
black paint here, brown paint there.

We forget things.

We don't think about each stroke.

We use too much of one color.

We don't sketch in pencil.

We mess up.

Sometimes we don't like our art.

We try to get rid of it,  
but it will always remain in our galleries,  
our lives,  
so learn  
from each mistake  
because your next artwork  
will be better.

Sometimes we need a reminder,

so always remember,  
life is an art gallery  
and the paintbrush  
is you.

**Kali Bucklen  
Grade 6  
Garnet Valley Middle School  
Garnet Valley School District  
Third Place**

### **The Forest of Life**

Fear is like snake venom.  
The longer you have it,  
The more it sinks in.

You might get that feeling if you step outside  
the safety of your house,  
And into the unsafe world around you.

In this world, the sky is pitch black,  
You couldn't see past anything  
more than a foot ahead of you.

You might have a plan  
For how to get out of this uncertain maze,  
But you can't.  
The path ahead will just keep twisting, and looping,  
until your back at square one.

Along the path,  
Most likely the darkest part,  
You will encounter an unsettling tomb,  
Of one who you claimed you loved.

A crow screeching,  
Telling you you'll never make it out.

You look to the stars for guidance,  
But they're covered in a sheet of ghostly taunting clouds.

You find a path that seems to have light up ahead.  
You follow it, and follow it, and just when you're beginning to soar with hope -!  
The path stops at a thorny underbrush.

Do you pursue it? Do you wade past the thorns?  
Will there be light up ahead? Or will you just get more lost?

Welcome to the world outside the walls.

**Trevor Mathews  
Grade 7  
E.T. Richardson Middle School  
Springfield School District  
First Place**

**The Simpler Things**

The sun peels the black from the sky  
The birds singing in harmony like choirs  
The sizzle of bacon on the hot pan  
The warm taste that soon follows  
The sun beaming towards my eyes,  
as I walk from my home  
The bus wheels pulling to a stop  
The banter of children and teens  
The obnoxious ring of the bell, like pots and pans as I enter the building  
The soothing silence of test-taking  
As it breaks to the scribbles of pencils and scoots of chairs  
Next period, progressing towards lunch  
and feeling the warm, gooey pizza in my mouth  
Finally fulfilling my hunger  
Outside, the wind blowing my face,  
Attracting my attention, like a whisper in the night  
Then, as I leave school for the day  
Coming home to the hopeful greets of my family  
The silent beeps of my phone going off  
Piping hot dinner on the table  
Resting my back on my bed  
The soft fiber comforting my back  
putting me to rest  
Letting the soothing silence, lull me to sleep  
My eyes flicker  
My muscles untwine  
My breathing relaxes  
The sun now shunned by the new darkness of night

**Ella DeLise**  
**Grade 7**  
**Haverford Middle School**  
**Haverford School District**  
**Second Place**  
**\*Poem inspired by art piece:**  
**Safron by Susan Goldstein**

### **My Story**

“Smile.”,  
“Just smile.”

No one will notice if I just smile,  
Keep my head down, glance up once in a while, and smile,

My brain is overflowing,  
People surrounding me,  
Losing breath,  
“Just get through the day.”

I walk around like a hard brick wall,  
Trying my best not to let people see what’s inside,  
But I can only do so much to push people away,  
So I start to trust,

When I let people in I bring down my strong brick wall,  
I tell them my secrets and they tell me theirs,  
I tell them information, my memories, my thoughts,  
But as I start bringing down my wall for good,

They break something.

The whole in the middle of my heart gets wider and wider,  
As I shove the person away,  
Trying my best to forget about them, forget they ever existed,  
But it is hard to forget when their footprints are marked inside of me,

I look, and I look, and I look,  
But nothing will patch the hole up,  
Nothing will sew it back together,  
it gets worse,

I try to smile,  
I really, really, try  
But the hole gets wider and wider,  
Eating me up to the point I can't be happy, to the point I can't make others  
Happy

I don't trust anymore,  
I don't bring down my wall anymore,  
I don't smile anymore,  
I don't talk anymore,

I'm skeptical of love,  
Of my friends,  
Of my family,  
Of the world,

I am now the hole.

It has taken over,  
It has eaten me up,  
It has taken over my life,  
I am now the hole.

Everyone has their own hole,  
Their own rips,  
Their own scrapes,  
Their own scares,

But each hole,  
Each rip,  
Each scrape and each scar,  
Tells a story,

And this hole,  
This is my story.

**Alyssa Iorio  
Grade 7  
E.T. Richardson School  
Springfield School District  
Third Place**

### **Freedom**

We thought we'd be trapped forever  
We were locked in a cage  
One that was impossible to escape  
We were stuck in the dark  
The light was visible  
But too far away  
Almost all hope seemed to dissolve in the darkness

Our way out seemed too slim  
But we noticed it getting larger  
Growing day by day  
Many became thrilled  
Although many were happy  
Others fell with grief

Many didn't realize how we regained the light  
It did not appear from a peaceful resolution  
Gunshots are what broke through the darkness  
Our hope was returned,  
The hope we never thought we could reclaim  
But the price to pay was unbearable

Many lives were lost  
But even more were saved  
We were freed from the grip that withheld us  
We will always remember the ones who broke us out  
The ones who gave us hope  
The ones who paid the cruel price  
Just to give us...  
Freedom

**Aubrey Wade  
Grade 8  
Springton Lake Middle School  
Rose Tree Media School District  
First Place**

**When the Wind Comes**

When the wind comes  
Through the grass and up the trees,  
Coming hard, and coming hard  
Taking away all that is known,  
Taking and taking until nothing is left  
Not following the paths of the wind before  
But making new ways as it goes,  
Taking and taking until nothing is left  
You may hear it coming, but maybe you don't  
Sometimes just silent, brushing past the long grass  
Along to the water,  
Looking to take, looking to take  
And it does take,  
Everything in its way,  
Gone and gone,  
Until nothing is left,  
Nothing is worth anything  
When the wind comes

**Sidney Padgett  
Grade 8  
Chichester Middle School  
Chichester School District  
Second Place**

**dopamine**

the horrid action  
i saw it happen  
never judge a book by its cover  
but i've been studying this book for years  
the lies have been piling on top of each other  
no need to make up a new one  
the daze in your eyes  
maybe you thought i was blind  
the effect you're feeling right now  
will fade away the next day  
but seeing you like this  
i could never forget

**Karley Stephens  
Grade 8  
Springton Lake Middle School  
Rose Tree Media School District  
Third Place**

### **Sunrises and Sunsets**

Bright blonde streaks break into a wave of navy.  
Brilliant colors of amber gold and sapphire blue  
Splattered against the morning canvas.  
A slow rise of ombre colors, spreading upwards,  
Touching as high as the sky reaches on the clearest day.  
Not a cloud of puffy white paint splotted, as far as the eye can see.  
A dot of cream breaks across the horizon,  
As the day is just beginning.

A soft glow turns into a vibrant parade of light.  
Indigo fades off and morphs into pure cerulean.  
A swirl mixes together to make a valiant color,  
Extending all along the coast.  
Sky blue has transitioned into main focus  
As the sun ascends higher as the day grows.

The day has begun as clouds begin to form  
Daffodil cotton balls enhance to bright white.  
The sun blazed its rays  
fairly stretched,  
They were absorbed by the blue skies.  
The clouds pulled into long streaks like happy accidents in a painting.  
They moved across the sky and shifted with the time.

A bright, uplifting sunrise.

Egyptian blue started to creep into the scene,  
Light blue sucked away with the sunshine.  
Egyptian turned to navy, just lighter than the sea.  
The sun dropped ever so slowly, then suddenly it rapidly sped up.  
There was just a second to observe each slide of illuminating colors.  
Tangerine and Marigold shone from the setting sun.

The sea becomes darker and darker  
except for the shimmering reflection of the dropping gold ball.  
Clouds like separate tarps with  
The many varieties of shades projected on them.  
Rays crowned the glowing circle,  
Booming scarlet and accents, the rays blending in the skies

Soon the astounding lively splatters of paint begin to fade.  
Crimson took over the scarlet,  
And the buttery yellowy-orange dulled,  
As the sun descended into the horizon.  
Indigo, crimson, and apricot blended into midnight blue.  
Darkness has now taken over and the sun has vanished.

But need not fret, for the sun will ride again on a new day.

**John Shelton III**  
**Grade 9**  
**Cardinal O'Hara High School**  
**Springfield School District**  
**First Place**

**My Midnight Eyes Behold**

amber fires burning brightly in majestic lampposts up

and down the street

obsidian eyes staring intently at me as I walk among

the animals of the night

pale light shining vibrantly from the full moon

thousands of miles away

pitch black water churning violently under the bridge

jet-black shadows reflecting perfectly my every move  
as I walk by the light of the town.

**Farhanaz Asskaryer**  
**Grade 9**  
**Interboro High School**  
**Interboro School District**  
**Second Place**

### **Why**

Why would you do that to someone you knew nothing about?  
Why would you do that to a complete stranger?  
Why would you let your personal opinions get in the way of your actions?  
Did your actions make you a better person now?  
No, you judged her  
You thought you were better than her  
You thought you had the right to say whatever you wanted  
You thought you were the best and  
I'm here to say you were none of those things  
You didn't think  
You hurt someone without even knowing it  
You looked at her  
And said something so ignorant  
Something so rude  
Something so judgmental  
You thought a hijab made her inferior to you  
Without knowing, you acted  
Without knowing, you hurt someone so sweet  
Someone so kind  
Someone who truly cared for others  
And lastly  
Someone who put others before herself

**Belen Scull  
Grade 9  
Penncrest High School  
Rose Tree Media School District  
Third Place**

**Alone**

I shut the door  
And I'm transported from the world,  
I'm in my own place now.

Light streaks from the crack of the door and the two open windows.  
They're like portals to the world I'm trying to escape from.  
I close the curtains gently.  
I want the world to know I'm not there,  
But I don't want it to think I left forever,  
So I leave a slight gap.

I pick up my bass.  
The color of a dandelion,  
The long neck of a wooden giraffe,  
The strap linking us together.

I plug into the amp.  
I start to play.  
The deep, familiar tone soothes me—  
Feeling the vibrations of the strings under my fingers,  
Running my fingers on the frets,  
The cold, smooth surface of the metal feels good on my callused fingers.  
I am oblivious to the rest of the world.  
It's just me and the bass right now.

The music fills the room.  
It's melodic with a calming motion  
Like salt water waves  
Washing over me.  
Its feeling spreading  
From my fingertips to the bottoms of my feet.

The tremor of the heavy, low music,  
Notes running up and down the stairs,  
The scales climbing:  
There's a warm feeling,  
It's engulfing me in the flames.  
That do not burn me,  
Like an embrace of a loved one.

The pounding notes of carefully plucking the heavy strings.  
It beats in my eardrums.  
And the sounds resonate.  
I feel the pressure,  
Each individual groove on the strings,  
Every twist of the metal wires.

I am away from everything else,  
Except the low music.  
I am away from people—

And I like it that way.

**Naheda Dahleh  
Grade 10  
Ridley High School  
Ridley School District  
First Place**

### **In Their Divinity, They Stole Her Happiness**

She liked to keep the trees  
Company. She would ask them  
her questions. She would ask about  
divinity and ask about immortality  
and ask about time. Oh, she would  
ask, and ask and ask. I suspect that  
her endless curiosity charmed them,  
for they would always answer,  
dancing branches swaying in the zephyrs  
of a sweet, summer day.  
To be honest, I couldn't tell you  
what the trees, would whisper.  
But I would say, "Cassidy,  
it's time to go home now."  
And she would hush me in reply.  
And then, proudly, she would announce,  
"Calliope is speaking to me herself!"  
Was this true? I don't know.  
But she told me herself that she was  
chosen by the Muses. Chosen, to sing.  
To write. To create. To love. Chosen,  
like Orpheus, she would say, elated.  
But Orpheus was destined for misery.  
And those chosen can never be happy.  
That is nature's rule at its core.  
The gods would do anything to cause despair.  
To accuse the innocent of guilt. In truth,  
the gods were envious of the happiness  
of mortals. And so, they devised their schemes.  
Select a mortal, give them power, rob them of their peace  
and rob them of their innocence.  
No evidence is necessary when you are almighty.  
Cassidy was no exception. And so, like Orpheus,  
not even the trees could save Cassidy  
from her anguish.

**Nicholas Yanzaguano  
Grade 10  
Sun Valley High School  
Sun Valley School District  
Second Place**

### **To the Monsters in My Closet**

I didn't think too much of you when I discovered you.  
You were there without any harm.  
But I did always feel a cold stare from you.  
Soon that stare turned into some murmuring.  
Followed by our conversations.  
At first, I didn't mind you, all night you kept me feeling vibrant.  
It was when I tried leaving you had some issues.

When I would go to study you would call constantly for me.  
I could resist at the beginning. But then I started to give in.  
It became harder to focus on everyday activities, you kept me distracted daily.  
I became charmed by your presence and couldn't escape.  
You quickly turned into an inconvenience and started disturbing me often.  
You had an opinion on all my actions, screaming so loud it was hard to ignore you.  
Then you brought back up memories which I had buried.

We started having arguments which were more one-sided.  
You made me rethink every action which tore me apart.  
Never knowing what's right and wrong I became disconnected from reality.  
So many emotions flowing, you filled my closet to the point where it was going to burst.  
But then you were gone. One day I woke up and everything was fine.  
I continued my life like you were never there.  
Until I met another monster. This one I had known longer than I thought.

This monster had been concealed by love and affection, but underneath was pure evil.  
This monster brought you back.  
With the two of you combined, my life was brought to hell.  
One of you tormenting my thoughts, the other controlling my feelings.  
But the thing was I became stronger, realizing the lies you told me I could push through.  
I finally started winning this seemingly endless war.  
So to the monsters in my closet, you've pained me enough.  
I won't take this anymore, break me down and I'll build myself up.  
It's just me against the two of you, and it's about time you leave and I get what I deserve.

**Cecelia McKinney  
Grade 10  
Ridley High School  
Ridley School District  
Third Place**

### **Kind Nightmare**

Every time I dream, I'm interrupted  
By the reality that pokes through the sheer curtain  
By my fears that shriek into my ears  
By you

You sneak into my haven  
Stabbing me with your reality  
Plunging your cruel sword into my chest  
Twisting the point of the blade  
So my heart squelches in despair  
And collapses

Even in its death  
My heart is haunted by you  
You are a cruel jester  
Who rips my bloody, pulsating heart out of my chest, paints her corpse, and laughs  
laughs, laughs, laughs, laughs, LAUGHS

But your mouth seldom moved  
And yet I know nonetheless  
I know by looking into the vast sea  
By crying out in empty trees  
By hopelessly meeting you in my dreams

All those times we spoke  
Confined to the walls of my skull  
I wish you had laughed at me  
A bellowing, cruel laugh  
So that when I heard your joyous symphony  
It wouldn't break my heart

**Shante Tolbert  
Grade 11  
Academy Park High School  
Southeast Delco School District  
First Place**

## **BLACK QUEEN**

The skin so melanin so soft and sweet.

As she wears her hair out and poofy...NO YOU CAN'T NOT TOUCH MY  
MELANIN BEAUTY.

As I sit and watch our young melanin king try to disrespect the Queens and ask "if this is a weave".  
As if the black girl over there, is not the same black girl here because these two  
black girls have two different color skin, and maybe her hair is less nappy.

I guess I can't be happy.

For your justification, NO all black girls do not wear weaves, just because if we have hair coming  
down to our sleeves.

Maybe in your transient mind, you would ask "WHY am I wearing my hair out?"

The average person wouldn't dare to comprehend, that most black girls do not like to wear their  
hair straightened with a middle part scalp.

Power to the Black Queen.

Maybe it is the color of our skin, you chain up for your grace without no mistake  
cops be so quick to mace.

Or maybe the body of a queens beauty as we are the only ones who are fighting in the black race  
community.

As my African American sistah stand to your feet, recognize you are A QUEEN.

As no one can compare him, her, or her our beauty will light up like a Christmas Tree.

Power to the queen of Nature, You are Beautiful it's something inside you that no  
one else has.

We cannot forget who we are and what we are our blood is thicker than glass.

Like our round ahhh....

TURKEY.

We are bold, we get big loud, when it's a big crowd, and they say we act ratchet and act wild but  
the next day the want criticizing on our chant "I'm black and I'm proud."

Oh wow this beyond me.

Come and see our mind is thicker than our bodies so do not try to play me. And  
our hair is thicker than...ughhh idk.

NO You Can Not Touch Me.

**Power to the Black Queen back then, now and more queens in the future**

**Joseph Schiffer  
Grade 11  
Ridley High School  
Ridley School District  
Second Place**

### **Intrusionem Saecularia**

If you could fly like an eagle? Would you?  
No, for the ground is the realm of man  
The skies are the domain of the spirits

If you could swim like a shark? Would you?  
No, for the shallows are our realm  
The depths are for the beasts down below

As mankind grows, we encroach upon worlds other than our own.  
We intrude into the dominions of mighty kings  
An unwanted scourge upon their lands,  
Why must we impose ourselves?

With wings of canvas,  
Suits of rubber  
Vehicles of steel,  
Do we invade

Twisted rebar and shattered glass,  
Bolts and screws hold together  
A fractured society, focused on pushing higher and further,  
Not a thought spared to the world.

We pierce the nightly expanse  
With buzzing lights and dismal smog,  
Covering our glowing giants and heavenly figures

We shroud the symphonies of nature,  
With our rumbling factories and automobiles,  
Covering our glowing giants and heavenly figures

Why do we seek to ruin our world?  
Only to conquer others?  
Is that the destiny of mankind?

**Sophia Chen  
Grade 11  
Ridley High School  
Ridley School District  
Third Place**

### **Strix Varia**

She cries for her freedom, cries for her purpose  
Indemned and condemned for the existence of being  
When the sunlight burns and the night is shunned, she cries  
Cries for the lifeblood of the night  
Cries for the children whose hearts beat only in death  
Cries quiet and silent, in the dead of the hunters' snarls

To free her is madness  
But you –  
You chose to anyway

I do not long for the silence  
But it is her plight that makes us suffer,  
Suffer in the rites of day that we have become so used to  
A light that has been so kind to us and yet –  
For her, the madness holds a different meaning,  
And the light holds nothing but scorn

They'll laugh, and watch her sing  
Like it's music to their ears, while she rages against the system  
She cries, but she rages, with all the force of a hurricane  
And in her fury she stirs a sea of unrest  
Howling to the moon their grievance

She is waves of fury trapped in a gilded cage  
Or worse, a tyrant free to roam in the night  
I don't understand her –  
I don't know who my love is  
And yet, like a shadow alights to the edges of a burning light  
I am drawn to her

My love, she doesn't understand what I'd do for her

We'd carry a corpse by night  
We'll carry a hearse by the river, and lay her to sleep in the water  
But in her silence raises the waves of revolution  
And what she wanted was nothing more than rebellion

No one else dares to thrive in the chaos

There's a sense of forlonging in the night  
A hushed sequel to the silence between them  
Because before dawn breaks we will die  
Wild and free from the clashing idiosyncrasies of day  
Like the winds of gales, from nightingale's wings  
She will be free to fly  
To rise

**Jacob N. Cano**  
**Grade 12**  
**Sun Valley High School**  
**Penn-Delco School District**  
**First Place**

### **Reconciliation**

Once sweet were we, and soulful was the sound  
Of words we wove into the Grassy Green,  
The words exchanged when we had chance to walk  
Upon the Pretty Fields of Yesteryear,  
The Season fill'd with Soft Affection still'd.

Though now a natural Winter wages worse  
Than Summer Sun—Earth's Candle—could have cur'd,  
The Cold could not have kept my nature cleans'd  
Of wishing, wanting something more than mere  
Acquaintance kept behind a Feigning Fog.

The Heart can't lie, the Head can't lead its haste  
To speed or slow, to change its path or pace.  
No Lie is absolute when answer'd less  
Than this, for this—the Heart—is patient, poor,  
And gentle, sows not Jealousy but Joy.

The Healthy Heart is honest, honored on  
Its Truth, its Tenderness that never knows  
How slowly Change does sap its charm to cease.  
Life moves, it morphs, else were not Life but like  
A Corpse, succumbed to changeless, wishless waste.

Though Change is thus, please change not this: my choice  
To care with Kindness, tenderly believe  
In you, the Flame, the Youth of Former Years.  
Let Passion, Pain, and Bitter Yearning yield  
To Precious Love, the Pearl of Lauded Price.

**Robert Pinder  
Grade 12  
Academy Park High School  
Southeast Delco School District  
Second Place**

Oasis,  
Where do you run with nowhere left to hide?  
These tides, corrupted men are only tempting me to oblige,  
But the trenches dare I mention, is a home I no longer reside,  
I escaped the oceans blue,  
But now stranded at sea,  
I am in between freedom and back where I used to be,  
Judicial systems want me imprisoned,  
Doesn't matter the innocence that I plead,  
Every fin within these depths want to feed on the very air I breathe, until I drown back into the  
sea,  
oasis,  
Where do I run with nowhere left to hide?  
These waves are weighing on me,  
How do I deny the easy way out,  
Jaws and fins, red or blue, gangs and gangbangers,  
These trenches were built for beasts of these seas,  
And here I am barely afloat,  
Evading the system's net, and ducking from street jaws,  
I'm just a fish trying to reach Promised Land,  
But it gets hard to think that I can,  
So  
Oasis, where do I run with nowhere left to hide?  
I'm a walking target as I progress through oceans blue,  
Until I swim to mainland of clouds, golden skies and doves,  
For the trenches were my birthright but the success and security will eventually be my home,  
But it's not easy as the white collar and street thugs want to pump my flesh with slugs,  
So I ask you this one more time,  
I'm ready to run away, just show me the way,  
Dear oasis,  
Where do I run with nowhere left to hide?

**Phoebe Houser  
Grade 12  
Ridley High School  
Ridley School District  
Third Place**

### **Blind Queens and Buried Kings**

This was your world, once.  
The shadows, the darkness, the throne upon which you sit...  
You earned them all.

Recall the day you made your first dollar  
In your father's auto repair shop  
Recall the triumphant taste on your lips  
The flutter of wings in your chest  
And the craving  
That incessant, growling hunger  
For more

Dig, your father hummed.  
Dig, your mother whistled.  
Dig, and so you dug.  
Deep and deep and deeper down.

It is dark down here, isn't it?

And when was the last time  
You saw their faces?

You hunger still, so far from the surface  
You hunger as your castle grows  
As you sculpt your subterranean Versailles  
As you earn and earn  
And make and build  
Deeper  
And farther from the light

And this is what happiness is  
Not on top of the world  
But rather, in the center.

You are at the core of it all, a puppet master  
A controller  
A king  
But you find you can no longer see  
That world as it is just above

It is dark down here, isn't it?  
And so hard to fly into that dimming sun  
When your wings are made of shadows

But trust me, dear  
As dark as it might be  
You wouldn't like this world by daylight

