



**Young Poets of Delaware County  
Contest Winners, 2021  
Table of Contents**

**Grade 1**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Place</b>	<b>My Brother</b>	<b>Rishwita Bhavirisetti Primos Elementary School</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Hannah Rose Davis Swarthmore Rutledge School</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Place</b>	<b>Come See the Beauty</b>	<b>Rosalie Kerr Radnor Elementary School</b>

**Grade 2**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Place</b>	<b>Covid</b>	<b>Caroline Bigelow Pennell Elementary School</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</b>	<b>Pizza</b>	<b>John McManus Worrall Elementary School</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Place</b>	<b>Elements of Life</b>	<b>William Carboni Scenic Hills Elementary School</b>

**Grade 3**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Place</b>	<b>Pasta Sandwiches in Quarantine</b>	<b>Adrianna Ho Wallingford Elementary School</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</b>	<b>Me Myself and I</b>	<b>Eve Wimmer Perelman Jewish Day School</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Place</b>	<b>Haiku</b>	<b>Lilly Costello Our Lady of Angels Regional</b>

**Grade 4**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Place</b>	<b>Talent</b>	<b>Avia Fasciocco Worrall Elementary School</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</b>	<b>Turning Ten</b>	<b>Devon Miller Worrall Elementary School</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Place</b>	<b>Grief</b>	<b>Gemma Hope Armstrong Hoffman Chatham Park Elementary School</b>

**Grade 5**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Place</b>	<b>A Magical Place</b>	<b>Greta Reilly Wayne Elementary School</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</b>	<b>Seasons</b>	<b>Lilyana Lane Ardmore Avenue Elementary School</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Place</b>	<b>The Ballad of Boredom and Burnt Bacon</b>	<b>Griffin Reach Wallingford Elementary School</b>

**Grade 6**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Place</b>	<b>Koi Garden</b>	<b>Emily Lourng Haverford Middle School</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</b>	<b>Where You Are</b>	<b>Jack Ertel Radnor Middle School</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Place</b>	<b>The Charts</b>	<b>Ella Sanders Garnet Valley Middle School</b>

**Grade 7**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Place</b>	<b>Then and Now</b>	<b>Kaitlyn Ho Strath Haven Middle School</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</b>	<b>Together, We'll Rise</b>	<b>Nalia Diaz Chester Eastside</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Place</b>	<b>The Lawn Mower</b>	<b>Anthony Dandrea E.T. Richardson Middle School</b>

**Grade 8**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Place</b>	<b>Fourteen is a Peculiar Age</b>	<b>Adam Bishop Chichester Middle School</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</b>	<b>Dear Dad</b>	<b>Keyarra Barley Darby Township School</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Place</b>	<b>ERROR: 403</b>	<b>Ava Martyn E.T. Richardson Middle School</b>

**Grade 9**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Place</b>	<b>Ode to My Jordans</b>	<b>Aaron Tang Episcopal Academy</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</b>	<b>Perfect Girl</b>	<b>Annie Curry Cardinal O'Hara High School</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Place</b>	<b>Changes</b>	<b>Edwinner Bazzie Cardinal O'Hara High School</b>

**Grade 10**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Place</b>	<b>Dissociated</b>	<b>Sarah Persia Ridley High School</b>
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**Grade 11**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Place</b>	<b>Swingin' Jazz</b>	<b>Melanie Jackson Cardinal O'Hara High School</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</b>	<b>The Male Gaze</b>	<b>Leah Boris Strath Haven High School</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Place</b>	<b>Cult</b>	<b>Cecelia McKinney Ridley High School</b>

**Grade 12**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Place</b>	<b>Glory in the Fall</b>	<b>Emma Karn Sacred Heart Academy</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</b>	<b>Claude Monet '81</b>	<b>Jillian Quintiliani Cardinal O'Hara High School</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Place</b>	<b>Secrets of Love</b>	<b>Freddie Rollo Marple Newtown High School</b>

**Rishwita Bhavirisetti  
Grade 1  
Primos Elementary School  
Upper Darby School District  
First Place**

**My Brother**

Oh my brother

You are the cutest one ever

Becoming sweet year by year

Never be fear

I will always be here

To make you cheer

I might be far or near

But One thing is clear

You are always my dear

Forever and ever

**Hannah Rose Davis  
Grade 1  
Swarthmore Rutledge School  
Wallingford Swarthmore S.D.  
Second Place**

## **Spring**

As the flowers bloom in spring  
all the birds begin to sing,  
with a tree singing too  
all the words make sense to you,  
while we all have a blast  
Spring has come at last!

**Rosalie Kerr  
Grade 1  
Radnor Elementary School  
Radnor School District  
Third Place**

**Come see the beauty**

I love Chanticleer because  
as I walk through the entrance  
the flowers put on perfume for their greatest show  
at the same time the cherry blossoms flutter down like rain,  
the vegetable garden is crawling with yummy food to make a stew

**Caroline Bigelow  
Grade 2  
Pennell Elementary School  
Penn-Delco School District  
First Place**

**Covid**

Covid is annoying.

Covid is sad.

Covid is unhappy.

Covid is mad.

Covid with masks.

Covid is a sickness.

Covid with stores closed.

Covid is a disease.

Covid is annoying, sad, unhappy, mad, masks, sickness and stores closed.

Covid is a disease.

Covid made the whole world close.

Covid did that.

**John McManus  
Grade 2  
Worrall Elementary School  
Marple Newtown School District  
Second Place**

**Pizza**

Cheese and tomato sauce

Pepperoni and more

Before I have it, my tummy starts to roar

I love pizza so much

I would have it a bunch

All flavors, all around

It's the most popular food in town!

**William Carboni**  
**Grade 2**  
**Scenic Hills Elementary School**  
**Springfield School District**  
**Third Place**

### **Elements of Life**

Fire keeps people warm

Ice lets us cool

Water cleanses our bodies

Terra is the earth where we grow crops

Nature gives us beauty

Lightness offers a new day

Darkness tells us it's time to rest

The elements give us a place to call home, our Earth.

**Adrianna Ho**  
**Grade 3**  
**Wallingford Elementary School**  
**Wallingford Swarthmore S.D.**  
**First Place**

### **Pasta Sandwiches in Quarantine**

1.

In quarantine

I missed my uncle's wedding  
because it was cancelled in May,

And Take Your Child to Work Day:

I was going to meet my mom's coworkers and friends  
and join her meetings.

I missed Field Day with games, and May Day with  
carnival games. Mr. C., my gym teacher, had planned it,  
and you could get half a lemon with a candy straw!

I miss going to school.

I miss having sleepovers: one in the beginning of summer  
and one at the end.

Some of my friends couldn't come  
to my birthday party. The magician  
couldn't come.

Before quarantine, I had plans  
with my good friend who moved to Boston  
to get together and sell all the leftover candies

and save every penny.

2.

In quarantine

I turned 8  
and learned to ride a bike

I learned that daddy makes yummy sandwiches  
and mommy makes good pasta.

Pasta sandwiches for lunch!

I can still see

my ballet friends  
and my classmates right online.

I still pick flowers on nature walks  
and walk on the rocks  
to get over the streams.

In quarantine, I grew half an inch.  
I learned how to feed my dog Rusty  
and take him outside.

I learned how to type without looking at the keyboard  
and how to make  
peanut butter sandwiches when daddy is busy, and

that our school nurse is a good yoga instructor  
and our second grade teacher reminds me  
that if I believe I can, I can.

I learned that I don't have to go out to the theater  
because I can watch movies at my house  
cuddling, eating snacks, and petting Rusty.

I learned I can relax anytime and anywhere,  
I close my eyes, I take deep breaths  
A couple of minutes later I open my eyes

and put my hands on my heart, and Namaste.  
I learned to read chapter books: *Harry Potter*,  
*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, oh! And don't forget

*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory!*  
I learned to organize my closet, to keep it clean.  
I grew to wear my big sister's clothes while in quarantine.

I learned that the crown-shaped virus is the Coronavirus.  
If I could talk to the Coronavirus,  
I'd say, "The Heat Is On! I Know

The Heat Can Stop You From Spreading."

**Eve Wimmer  
Grade 3  
Perelman Jewish Day School  
Second Place**

### **Me Myself and I**

I am a flamingo wearing pink and eating shrimp.  
Like a star bright and beautiful.  
I am a flute, weird and whimsical.  
White as a canvas

ready for new and endless possibilities.  
Like glue  
I stick with my friends forever.  
I am like a jet flying through my thoughts.

Like a sour patch  
sweet and sour at the same time. Like a violin  
I am  
light on my feet. I am a sunflower happy  
and joyful. I can be a drum  
booming  
at a concert. I am a camel not drinking  
much water. I am the day

peaceful  
and busy.  
I am like a butterfly flying  
from project to project.

**Lilly Costello  
Grade 3  
OLA Regional  
Third Place**

### **The Beach**

Sun shining on me  
Relax on the hot, hot sand  
Enjoy an ice cream

**Avia Fasciocco  
Grade 4  
Worrall Elementary School  
Marple Newtown School District  
First Place**

### **Talent**

I'm feeling so alone  
My talent will never be shown  
I've tried soccer but that net is so far out of my aim  
Because when I take a shot I feel so much shame  
I've tried dancing but when I twirl  
I feel like vanilla and chocolate swirl  
I've tried baking and sports and this and that  
But my potential just did a splat  
I give up I say  
All I feel is true dismay  
So I rush through the door  
And oh how my tears pour  
So I start to write a sentence then two then 3  
And before I know it I'm on a word shopping spree  
My talent is writing I yell and I scream  
I shot a big smile and ear to ear I beam  
When I start writing it all begins to show  
When I put pen to paper it all just seems to flow  
So don't give up if you can't find your talent super fast  
You'll find it one day and doing it will be such a blast  
Everybody has a talent it can be anything  
Dance, soccer, sports, baking, or maybe you can sing sing sing  
But never give up, you do have a talent deep deep in

**Devon Miller**  
**Grade 4**  
**Worrall Elementary School**  
**Marple Newtown School District**  
**Second Place**

## **Turning Ten**

This past year I turned ten.

Turning ten this year should have meant having fun with friends with sleepovers and movie nights.

Turning ten this year should have been camping with scouts.

Turning ten this year should have been a vacation at the beach.

But...

Turning ten this year meant not leaving our house for days.

Turning ten this year meant wearing masks all day.

Turning ten this year meant not being able to go to school.

Turning ten this year meant no more family parties.

But...

Turning ten this year allowed me to have more time with my parents.

Turning ten this year taught me to not fight with my brothers as much.

Turning ten this year let me learn outside and explore.

Turning ten this year meant I made so much slime I didn't have any more containers!

Turning ten this year meant I got to watch all the new shows on Netflix!

Turning eleven will happen this year too, and I hope it will be just as good as being ten.

**Gemma Hope Armstrong Hoffman  
Grade 4  
Chatham Park Elementary School  
Haverford Township School District  
Third Place**

### **Grief**

Darkness consumes me

As dark as a night with no stars

No moon

I think of everyone that's left on the way

Everyone who I will never be able to see

Even just for another day

A heart snapped into fragments

One piece gone forever

Another gone forever

Two little, seemingly insignificant pieces

Can make all the difference

**Greta Reilly  
Grade 5  
Wayne Elementary School  
Radnor Township School District  
First Place**

### **A Magical Place**

From the bulky brown roots to the high tips of the large maple tree are homes,  
Bird homes,  
Squirrel homes,  
And my home.  
When I am at the tips of the treetops,  
I am a mother bird searching for wiggly squiggly worms fresh for my morning meal.  
When I am relaxing at the shady base of the tree,  
I am a young squirrel nibbling on my small round acorn for a munchy crunchy lunch.  
When I am in the middle of the tree  
I am me watching, feeling and breathing in life.  
I look down with my eagle eye and see a fresh blanket of green  
The dull red leaves shielding my happy face from the bright shimmering sun.  
I play  
I climb  
I swing  
I relax  
All on that one living figure.  
I have memorized every inch of the smooth brown bark.  
I have a heart in this tree.  
I love this magical place.

**Lilyana Lane**  
**Grade 5**  
**Ardmore Avenue Elementary**  
**William Penn School District**  
**Second Place**

## **Seasons**

Silver snowflakes  
Skating on lakes  
Snowmen that stand in a snowy white land  
Blue jays that feed on sunflower seeds  
Angels that pose in wintertime clothes,  
Winter

The dainty blue skies above me  
The feeling of moist grass below my bare feet  
The sounds of a free running stream  
The warmth of the sun on my face  
The sight of a meadow filled with flowers  
The taste of fresh picked raspberries  
Spring

Light colored tops  
Flip flops  
4<sup>th</sup> of July parade  
Hot nights  
Bright baseball lights  
Bathing suits  
Shooting hoops  
Water spout  
Schools out  
Summer

The leaves are  
falling one by one  
The sunny days  
will soon be gone  
Yellow, orange, brown, and green  
The colors of autumn can be seen  
The wind, the rain, the sun shines through  
It's colder now for me and you  
Autumn

**Griffin Reach  
Grade 5  
Wallingford Elementary School  
Wallingford Swarthmore School District  
Third Place**

**“The Ballad of Boredom and Burnt Bacon”**

I'm here, sitting binded to the horrors

The horrors of being bored

feeling like a piece of burnt bacon

Because who likes burnt bacon

their bacony lives wasted

They are just sitting there

waiting to be tasted

Like burnt bacon I am because

Of the fifth wheel I've become

Trapped forever in boredom,

Like being in the oven too long

Am I even sane

Comparing myself to that thing,

That disgusting monstrosity

That people call food

Why am I like this?

**Emily Lournng  
Grade 6  
Haverford Middle School  
Haverford Township School District  
First Place**

### **Koi Garden**

A girl ran to the garden with tears flooding in her eyes,  
She clutched her chest while listening to the hum of small dragonflies and ladybugs,  
And found herself wandering around for hours, a clock ticking of an unsettling silence,  
She stopped at her pond of Koi, full blooming flowers,  
And heard a soft Koto playing in the distance,

The girl thought of her mother and covered her ears,  
She was used to this lonesome feeling,  
And had felt it a million times before,  
She glanced back at the garden,

The girl noticed the Ajisai and Tsubaki bursting between the roofs of shrubs,  
She watched as the moonlight perfectly caught her brother's glass furin wind chimes,  
And the moonlight cascaded across the grass in vivid colors,  
A whimsical glow that luminated her whole life,  
It was her favorite thing he left behind,

The girl latched her focus on the Koi pond,  
She observed as the lily pads mingled with the blushing lotus,  
And the Koi seemed to swirl around in a slow path of orange and black, clumped  
together,  
Their presence brought the girl a sense of wonder,

For how do the Koi fish live so long,  
How can they stand singing the same song,  
And living in the same small pond,  
Stuck in something never changing,

The girl let go of her ears,  
She let her tears flow,  
She listened to the sweet Koto from over the fence,  
She sat and entered a world full of memories and thoughts,

For how many nights have I spent sweeping broken shards from my father's broken  
bottles on the floor,  
How can I stand lying in my own garden,  
Her own pond,  
My own prison,

The girl took the instrument she never could play,

She took one koi fish from her pond, the brightest one who could shine brighter than a  
thousand diamonds,  
And played her mother's Koto until the sun peeked from the snowcapped mountains in  
the North,  
She put her fish in a jar made from the old broken glass shards of her father and  
brother,  
And waited in her garden for the new day

**Jack Ertel  
Grade 6  
Radnor Middle School  
Radnor Township School District  
Second Place**

### **Where You Are**

This is where you are.  
Please note.  
You are reading this poem.  
Now get up.  
Walk to a space with a desk,  
And draw a person.  
Use only a pencil.  
Notice the detail.  
Now draw that same person with color.  
Observe the blank space around the person.  
Now draw the sun.  
And some grass.  
And the sky.  
Think about the effect that color has on drawing.  
How would you describe it?  
What is the difference  
Between this and this?  
Please take note.  
Of where you are.  
Did you really draw that person?  
Did you really draw the sun, and grass, and the sky?  
You are still reading this poem, which will end.  
You aren't there yet, but you are close.  
Now explain what the point of all this is.

**Ella Sanders  
Grade 6  
Garnet Valley Middle School  
Garnet Valley School District  
Third Place**

## **The Charts**

Average  
That's what the charts say  
Average height, Average weight  
Average vision, Average hearing  
That's what the charts say  
I'm an average 12 year old girl  
That's what the charts say  
The charts can tell me how tall I'll be or if I need glasses  
But the charts  
Can't tell me who I am

I wander through life  
Asking questions about everything I pass  
*"How is it doing that?"*  
*"Why did you use those parts?"*  
I wander through life  
Trying to find the right path  
Because sometimes  
The path for me is the path untaken  
Unwalked  
Unexplored  
I wander through life  
Trying, to find my way

I'm a blurred image  
    A mix of everything  
I'm a gorilla  
    smart and fierce  
I'm a shapeshifter  
    Confused on who I am  
    And at the same time  
    Becoming my own thing  
I'm a squirrel  
    always exploring

finding new things to ponder  
I'm a diamond  
    The process is long and messy  
    But the result is beautiful and unique  
I'm potatoes, and spaghetti and meatballs  
    for my Irish and Italian roots  
I'm a sunflower yellow  
    Giggling, Smiling, Happy  
I'm a peach  
    My skin a light yellow, orange  
I'm a penguin  
    I love to ski

But you know what I'm not  
I'm not  
a line  
on a chart

**Kaitlyn Ho**  
**Grade 7**  
**Strath Haven Middle School**  
**Wallingford-Swarthmore S.D.**  
**First Place**

### **Then and Now**

If I knew then what I know now  
I would have prepared for house arrest  
because of those crown-shaped bacteria  
those wrecking balls

I would have told myself to enjoy  
every bit of food at our last restaurant  
to savor the laughter and spring clothes  
that I would get at the last mall

But they felt like normal days  
the astonishing days full of surprises  
the days I took for granted  
when I could wonder  
*What will happen next?*

But that's gone now  
I know that things will never be the same  
That even after there are less cases  
and they find a vaccine  
No one will be willing to jump into ball pits anymore

If this never happened  
now I would be shopping for summer dresses  
dancing with joy because my PSSAs are over  
and because I survived my first year at middle school  
I would be eating lots of ice cream  
Maybe I wouldn't have discovered  
frozen grapes  
without with the help of house arrest

If I was able to tell my past self  
to savor every colorful memory  
maybe then those memories like fluttering birds  
could have left me with some feathers of feeling

licking gelato on the streets of Rome  
cool sweet gelato melting on my tongue  
washing away the heat  
like gentle rain on an aching body  
The memory of diving  
into the almost deep end of the pool  
calm swirling beams of light  
twisting through the blue water  
in contrast to the shaking inside  
That is how I remember

If I knew then what I know now  
slammed  
behind the walls  
that were once my sanctuary  
I would prepare myself for the walks  
that remind me there is more than my house  
walking five miles  
the long walk in the woods  
lush greens grit and walking across clear rivers  
The neighborhood walk  
that isn't even that long  
Crisp, cool air and dying petals  
falling like our voices on the silent streets  
The stripes of dirt on pink bike tires  
Walking isn't just walking anymore

Maybe  
if the me in the future  
came up to me right now  
and told me what was going to happen  
to this mess

Perhaps  
I could know  
when this will all be over

**Nalia Diaz**  
**Grade 7**  
**Chester Eastside**  
**Second Place**

### **Together, We'll Rise**

Today might knock us down  
Push us to the ground  
But, like butterflies  
We'll rise.  
The coronavirus might be in our way  
Turning us weaker everyday  
Hope may have not yet been found  
But that doesn't mean it's not around  
It's in you at all times  
It's just that you can't see it fine  
You can't do anything alone  
No one can do it on their own.  
For starters  
Look at the doctors  
They are caring for patients  
Not themselves  
Despite the damages  
Despite the challenges  
They still stand  
Like a hard-solid bronze statue,  
Like statues, they need to be polished  
Friends like us wipe their bruises away  
We cheer them on  
Because our hope for them is never gone  
Our cheering helps them shine like a gem  
So they see we are here for them.  
We may not have our normal lives  
But we have something powerful  
And no one can take it away  
Not the virus  
Not bosses  
Not bad leaders  
Not fears  
Not racism  
Not stress's mess  
Not quarantine  
Not tears

Not problems  
Not toxins  
Not bullies  
Not this dreadful year,

It's us.

We are connected  
Like tree branches  
And together,  
We'll rise.  
Life won't look perfect  
But that doesn't mean  
Life is ugly  
No one  
Can face their problems alone  
We  
Need  
To  
Do  
This

                    Together  
Whether we see it or not  
Whether we hear it or not  
Whether we feel it or not  
Together, we'll rise.

We will never surrender to evilness  
We will strive for what is right  
Once a problem shows its hideous head  
We

    Will

        Face

            It

                Together                like parakeets  
We will fly in harmony, stick together like glue  
our smooth wings will never separate from us, we won't stop  
We'll be together, when fear doesn't budge, or when darkness  
Grabs us, our white bird selves will fly for eternity.  
                    Together, we'll rise.

**Anthony Dandrea  
Grade 7  
E.T. Richardson Middle School  
Springfield School District  
Third Place**

**“The Lawn Mower”**

The lawn mower

It approaches me quickly

My impending doom

**Adam Bishop  
Grade 8  
Chichester Middle School  
Chichester School District  
First Place**

## **Fourteen**

Fourteen is a peculiar age.  
Being fourteen means my body doesn't fit me.  
Lanky limbs, floppy feet,  
Standing tall above my classmates.  
I am a Colossus of the Hallway.  
Constantly feeling ravenous.  
Wanting to fill my stomach and my mind,  
But without being awkward about it.  
Will I ever grow into myself?

Fourteen is a puzzling age.  
Being fourteen means keeping alert.  
Aware of what I say. Aware of what I do.  
It is hard to stay unnoticed when I am the largest person in the room,  
And all I want to do is stay under the radar, so I am not accused of causing trouble.  
But I can't always go ninja, because my sibling casts a long shadow...  
That I can't always escape and am forced to live up to, even though they say I don't have to.  
I feel the responsibility.

Fourteen is a transient age.  
Being fourteen means so many ambiguities, so many questions.  
Changes lie ahead of me.  
New age brackets, friends, and school.  
New expectations.  
Can I meet them?

Fourteen is a fickle age.  
Being fourteen means I am young enough to whittle my summer days away by hanging out with friends,  
But I can't because of the virus.  
For I have been cheated out of a year or two of my youth.  
My fourteen sometimes feels like twelve.  
Being fourteen means feeling like I don't ever want to grow up,  
I cannot be old enough to grow up.  
I am not prepared to grow up yet.

I want to capture this firefly moment and put it in a mason jar,  
On the summer night of fourteen.  
Being fourteen also means that the world is out there waiting for me,  
Arms outstretched, spreading out its cornucopia of bounty,  
And I cannot wait to sample it.  
If only I could overcome my fear of starting.

Fourteen is an innocent age,  
Teetering on the cusp of young adulthood.  
For now, I am trying desperately to hold onto everything I know from fourteen,  
Because fifteen is coming up quickly,  
And I have a feeling I am going to miss being fourteen.

**Keyarra Barley  
Grade 8  
Darby Township School  
Southeast Delco School District  
Second Place**

**Dear Dad**

They say that time heals all wounds, does it?  
Will I feel better today or tomorrow afternoon?

Confused, hurt, and scared,  
How could your judgement be so impaired?

You left my sister, my mother, and me.  
The night you went to prison, you became an absentee.

An absentee father, an absentee husband,  
Mom rose up, we were able to adjust and

We figured it out, but it was hard.  
I'm okay on the outside, but inside I'm scarred.

I'm scarred because at 13, I'm angry.  
I'm angry because honestly and quite frankly,

I love you so much and I question your love for me.  
If you love me, why did you flee?

I never got that answer from you, you never thought to explain.  
I guess you never wanted to realize the extent of my pain.

Or my sadness and despair  
When girls were going to father/daughter dances, and I had no one there.

And so, the cycle continues daily.  
I'm sad and I'm angry and sometimes I even blame me.

You come home soon; 8 years have passed.  
I honestly hope we can forge a relationship that will last.

Time is not a healer, time does not heal all wounds,  
Time has made me wonder and made me conclude.

That I am not sure if I can ever forgive you, and I know I can never forget.  
I just hope in the long run, I have no regret.

Ava Martyn  
Grade 8  
E.T. Richardson Middle School  
Springfield School District  
Third Place

**Error: 403**

**PLEASE ENTER A SERIES OF PASSCODES TO PROCEED:**

I am a female.

**ACCESS GRANTED.**

I can fend for myself.

**ACCESS DENIED. PLEASE TRY AGAIN.**

I am weak and always rely on men?

**ACCESS GRANTED.**

I am strong, confident, and can handle pain.

**ACCESS DENIED. PLEASE TRY AGAIN.**

I am always emotional and overdramatic?

**ACCESS GRANTED**

I can hold a position of authority.

**ACCESS DENIED. PLEASE TRY AGAIN.**

I can only work under others who will direct me?

**ACCESS GRANTED**

I can be the breadwinner in my family.

**ACCESS DENIED. PLEASE TRY AGAIN.**

I can only be the mother and the caretaker?

**ACCESS GRANTED**

I can have a varied wardrobe, and I may present myself in a natural way.

**ACCESS DENIED. PLEASE TRY AGAIN.**

I always wear dresses and make-up?

**ACCESS GRANTED**

My body is beautiful, and everyone's body is different.

**ACCESS DENIED. PLEASE TRY AGAIN.**

I am and need to be skinny and dainty?

**ACCESS GRANTED**

I can have moments to speak up and/or say what I want.

**ACCESS DENIED. PLEASE TRY AGAIN.**

I must be polite and let everyone else speak?

**ACCESS GRANTED**

I am sick of the stereotypes.

**ERROR: 403**

I can have my own individuality.

**ERROR: 403**

I will speak up.

**ERROR: 403**

**SYSTEM BREACHED.**

**ALL ACCESS GRANTED.**

**Aaron Tang  
Grade 9  
Episcopal Academy  
First Place**

### **Ode To My Jordans**

A doorbell gave me  
two  
new  
shoes,  
in front of my eyes,  
all the way  
from an  
industrial  
factory  
13 hours away  
in China.  
I lifted them to my  
eyes and  
laced my finger  
through the cushioned,  
mesh foam.  
I would not try them on;  
they were  
too beautiful  
to wear out.  
Prized shoes,  
my feet were  
unfit cardboard  
boxes with tree  
branch nails  
and rusty bones.  
They were a coal  
miner's suit,  
a fisherman's  
tie, but they were mine.  
They were so polished  
and shiny,  
my feet seemed so  
rejectable,  
like two corrupt  
judges, judges  
unworthy of

deciding the fate  
of a man's life.  
Nevertheless,  
I resisted  
the promising temptation  
to strut around  
the schoolyard  
with these superior shoes,  
as models  
do on runways,  
as gamblers flaunt  
their money.  
I resisted  
the nagging impulse  
to set them  
free from  
their cage,  
and let mother  
earth take its  
course  
every day.  
Like a scientist  
who had found  
a dinosaur  
egg to  
keep and  
examine  
for himself,  
I took my  
last gaze,  
fixed the  
shoe's tissue  
paper, closed  
the box, and  
stored them  
away  
for the  
season.  
They were scuffed  
in my first  
game.

The moral  
of my ode is this:

Beauty is only

true beauty  
when you  
can do more  
than just admire  
and stare at  
leather shoelaces and foam soles.

**Annie Curry**  
**Grade 9**  
**Cardinal O'Hara High School**  
**Second Place**

### **Perfect Girl**

A perfect girl, a wonderful life  
Many would think she lived far from strife  
Yet when she's alone, and left with her thoughts  
Her mind starts to wander, she is left overwrought  
So she'll cry a river then swim to the shore,  
Whatever this is she can take it no more,  
Escaping the torment of her own mind,  
What's lost, will she ever be able to find,  
Somehow the darkness is still brighter than light,  
Though try and try as she might,  
She still wears that mask, believes it all true  
Dives deeper and deeper 'till she no longer knew  
But deep down it's still there  
Under her well-kept hair  
The absence of light, no glimmer of hope  
This 'perfect girl' can no longer cope

**Edwinner Bazzie  
Grade 9  
Cardinal O'Hara High School  
Third Place**

## **Changes**

Unforeseen, unencountered,  
And unattainable changes.

Wondering when life outside will change, but they'll never face it.  
Locked in a,  
Downward spiral,  
The repeated cycle  
Of what seems like,  
Definite change.

Of what really is,  
Indefinite ignorance.

Who am I?  
What am I?  
Where do I belong?

Continue to pester my thoughts with its monotonous tone.  
Accompanied by,  
The ringing in my ears.  
Of what seems like, a long black hole  
And at the end of that tunnel I do not see light,  
But hear cries of, "Rest in peace-", "Rest in power-", "Long live-", and "Justice for-".  
Fragmented sentences. Unfinished.

And even though this is a spoken word,  
I am still learning to speak.  
Still learning to compartmentalize the essence of being me.

So I make light at the end of that tunnel,  
That is what I wanna be.  
All of these unforeseen, unattainable, and unencountered changes in this world  
Haven't changed the spirit that lies in me.

**Sarah Persia  
Grade 10  
Ridley High School  
Ridley School District  
First Place**

### **Dissociated**

When I close my eyes my body disconnects from my soul.  
I can feel myself grasping,  
Holding it under its arms,  
And lifting the immeasurable weight off the ground.

I want to abandon this weight,  
But I know it must follow me.

*one day.*

*one hour.*

*one minute.*

I will be back inside my encasement,  
Ready to walk on my own feet.

But right now...

I am floating with my body acting,  
As the rock that grounds me to Earth.  
I am a hot air balloon.

All bodies are good for is trampling,

*the grass.*

*the flowers.*

*the ants.*

All they do is kill.

Yet... bodies also have brains,  
And without my body, I would simply not... exist.

Maybe the body is essential,  
Maybe the world has purpose,  
Maybe I deserve to see,  
...perhaps deserve to be?

So, although my vision is hazy,  
And I am very dazey,  
I still hope I will land back,  
Into my body.

As my soul finally settles in,  
Eyelashes uncurling from the cheek,  
I can finally breathe

*A breath.*

*Now two?*

*Maybe three.*

**Melanie Jackson**  
**Grade 11**  
**Cardinal O'Hara High School**  
**First Place**

**Swingin' Jazz**

As I put in my AirPods, Jazz floods my ears.  
Soulful, smooth, and swinging.  
I could listen for years and years.  
It always gets me singing.

That Fascinating Rhythm makes me Jive.  
Doing Kathy's Waltz with the Watermelon Man.  
After breaking a sweat, I decide to Take Five,  
but I went back to dancing before the next song began.

Davis, Coltrane, Fitzgerald and Monk;  
the greats, the icons, the coolest cats.  
Can always lift me out of my funk  
unlike these new copycats.

I close my eyes and it transports me to Ipanema beach and New York streets.  
Or I Imagine that I'm at Mardi Gras in New Orleans instead,  
any city with those fresh beats.  
As the song ends and I open my eyes, I'm just sitting on my bed.

**Leah Boris  
Grade 11  
Strath Haven High School  
Wallingford-Swarthmore S. D.  
Second Place**

### **The Male Gaze**

The spotlight flushes my cheeks  
And illuminates the crowd  
It's a full house, just like every other night  
The faces are blurry--I don't really know  
Who they are  
I try to turn away from them, but  
They're all around me  
And I can feel them scrutinizing my body  
One of them pulls out opera glasses,  
Frowning at the hair above my lip  
And on my legs  
And under my arms  
So I sink down on the stage,  
Drawing my legs in front of me,  
My hair falling in front of my face  
I closed the curtain, but  
I don't want to live like this forever

I can see another actress in the distance:  
My grandmother, at eighty-seven years old,  
Standing on a scale, the stage littered with  
Anti-aging creams and neck slimmers she bought to  
Quiet the boos from the lingering crowd and  
I'm sick of us feeling like we have to perform  
Every waking moment  
So I rise up  
And I talk a little too assertively  
And I stand a little too confidently  
And I watch as the seats empty  
And I smile.

**Cecelia McKinney  
Grade 11  
Ridley High School  
Ridley School District  
Third Place**

## **Cult**

Temple, temptress  
You invite me inside  
Entranced by the beauty of your lips  
I tune out your words  
And never look back

Worshipper, worship  
The crevasses of your mind  
Your ideas  
That invite me to explore  
The expression of your creation

No one can resist your beauty  
Because of your wisdom  
And no one can resist your wisdom  
Because of your beauty

You are as if Aphrodite and Athena  
Melded in the fires of Hades  
And ascended  
With the sole purpose  
Of luring me inside

You kiss me with your blood  
As I kiss you with mine  
And we bleed into each other  
Bound by poisoned lips  
Connected through knotted heartstrings

A part of me knows  
That you are apathetic to my devotion  
Or that you merely see me as a tool  
An extension of your own divinity  
But I will never mind

Temple, temptress  
I am in love

**Emma Karn  
Grade 12  
Sacred Heart Academy  
First Place**

### **Glory in the Fall**

The sun descends the staircase of the sky  
Arrayed in shining robes of molten gold.  
A woman with a face too bright to see,  
Yet he can hardly keep his eyes away.

The moon illumines the ballroom of the night  
In gown of sterling satin, lace and tulle.  
Transparent fabric gauzes the expanse.  
And he would like to dance within her arms.

The laughter of the stars who toss their heads  
Is hollow, like a puncture in the air.  
Their hot white eyes peer out and never blink.  
He thinks their edges beckoning and sharp.

Why does man desire to reach the heavens?  
Their blazing grandeur is not his to touch  
Unless he does consent to be consumed.  
He would do better to remain on earth.

Forbidden as the apple ever was,  
The universe calls only for our ears,  
Helpless with discontent if we remain,  
Helped to splendid doom if we ascend.

**Jillian Quintiliani**  
**Grade 12**  
**Cardinal O'Hara High School**  
**Second Place**

**Claude Monet '81**

Bright colors of yellow and shadows of orange entangle me as they firmly, yet calmly twist  
and turn in a never ending dream of peace  
I can't help myself but to gaze back  
I forget about life while my brain is transfixed on the unceasing vision of solitude,  
tranquility, and satisfaction  
This vastly invincible fantasy of concord has no malice, not an ounce of envy, and not a  
speck of anger  
I watch each vibrant yellow flower turn towards its own dreams like a sailor gallivanting  
on the great sapphire seas wondering what his next destination will grant him  
The petals that float on my pale teal wall transport me to another realm with no stain of  
fear or worry of my newest change in progression  
I find serenity in my latest perception  
Paintings are forever, as are the bright tones that swirl in my direction  
I listen carefully to the sunflowers flowers delectly howling your life is free and your  
forthcomings are no exception

**Freddie Rollo  
Grade 12  
Marple Newtown High School  
Marple Newtown School District  
Third Place**

### **Secrets of Love**

How does one describe something never felt?  
Something so complex and so unsure  
Cards that many people are not dealt  
Notorious for pleasure and for gore

A swan dive off a bridge onto some rocks?  
An endless expedition to find gold?  
A death trap that drives lustful fools in flocks?  
A warm embrace and comfort from the cold?

It's hard to say when you don't have a flame  
There's so much you've been told but never known  
So simple yet so hard to join the game  
But maybe it gets clearer as you've grown

As sweet and innocent as a white dove  
So is the anomaly known as love

### **1<sup>st</sup> Grade Judge**

**Connie Swartzman**

Connie Swartzman has been published in the Schuylkill Valley Journal and won first prize in poetry at the 2019 Philadelphia Writers' Conference. She taught kindergarten classes for over thirty years. She writes memoirs and poems and participates in writing classes and critique groups.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Judge**

**Emiliano Martin**

Emiliano Martín, poet and author of many poetry Chapbooks as well as nine books. His latest title is "Unforgettable Moments-Love Poems," published in 2021. For over twenty four years he has assisted as a judge to Delaware County Young Poets Poetry Contest. He is also a former Executive Director of Latin American Guild for the Arts (LAGA). Presently and since 2018 he serves as President of Pennsylvania Poetry Society.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Judge**

**Richard Bank**

Richard Bank is a retired attorney who is in his eightieth journey around the sun. He likes logs, bogs and hogs. He also likes dogs but the rhyme is off. He was happy to judge the Young Poets Event and enjoyed reading the third grade poems.

### **4<sup>th</sup> Grade Judge**

**Steve Delia**

Steve Delia has been a past judge for this contest for several years. He has been involved with poetry in many capacities including reading, hosting, judging and workshops. He has been with the Madpoets for over 30 years. He has done poetry readings in all kinds of venues including coffee houses, libraries, book stores and radio. He has 7 books. His latest book is called Poetry Time and can be purchased through Amazon or him personally. He loves this event and seeing all the youngsters writing poetry.

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade Judge**  
**Abbey J. Porter**

Abbey J. Porter writes poetry and memoirs about people and relationships, life and loss—sometimes even with a bit of humor. A Pennsylvania native, Abbey has been writing since she was a child. She holds an MFA in creative writing from Queens University of Charlotte, an MA in liberal studies from Villanova University, and a BA in English from Gettysburg College. Abbey works in communications and lives in Cheltenham, Pa., with her two beloved dogs—who help her remember to smile, particularly during these challenging times.

**6<sup>th</sup> Grade Judge**  
**Prabha Nayak Prabhu**

Prabha Nayak Prabhu is a retired language teacher . Her articles have appeared in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and *The Delaware County Daily Times*. She has been published in several journals including *The Mad Poets Review*, *Schuylkill Valley Journal*, *Philadelphia Poets*, *The Fox Chase Review* and the *Anthology, Selfhood: Varieties of Experience*.

Her chapbook *Layers* was published by Finishing Line Press in 2019.

**7<sup>th</sup> Grade Judge**  
**Brooke Palma**

Brooke Palma grew up in Philadelphia and currently lives in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Many of her poems focus on the connections between culture and identity and finding beauty in the everyday. Her work has been published in *The Mad Poets' Review*, *Moonstone Arts*, *Toho Journal*, and *E-Verse Radio* (online), and work is forthcoming in *Unbearables: A Global Anthology*. Her chapbook, *Conversations Unfinished*, was published by The Moonstone Press in August 2019. She hosts the Livin' on Luck Poetry Series at Barnaby's West Chester.

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Judge**  
**Mike Cohen**

Mike Cohen is a local performance poet. His articles on sculpture appear in the *Schuylkill Valley Journal*.

### **9<sup>th</sup> Grade Judge**

**Amy Barone**

Amy Barone's latest poetry collection, *We Became Summer*, from New York Quarterly Books, was released in 2018. She wrote chapbooks *Kamikaze Dance* (Finishing Line Press) and *Views from the Driveway* (Foothills Publishing.) Her poetry has appeared in *Local Knowledge*, *New Verse News*, *Paterson Literary Review*, *Sensitive Skin*, and *Standpoint* (UK), among other publications. She spent five years as Italian correspondent in Milan for *Women's Wear Daily* and *Advertising Age*. She belongs to the Poetry Society of America and the *brevitas* online poetry community that celebrates the short poem. A native of Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, Barone lives in New York City.

### **10<sup>th</sup> Grade Judge**

**Stu O'Connor**

Stu O'Connor is an educator, musician, and writer who has spent his life dedicated to the power of the word, the necessity of precision in language, and the human need for story as a method of transmitting culture, ideas, and understanding. He has been published in numerous literary and online sources including the *Mad Poets Review*, *Moonstone Poetry Writers Ink* anthologies, and *Silver Sage Magazine*, as well as performing music at many Philadelphia area venues and local radio broadcasts.

### **11<sup>th</sup> Grade Judge**

**Peter Baroth**

Peter Baroth, writer, artist, and musician, is a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis and Temple Law School. His novel is *Long Green* (iUniverse) and his book of poetry, *Lost Autographs* (Moonstone Press). He has been published in *Philadelphia Poets*, *Red Fez*, *Schuylkill Valley Journal*, *Apiary*, *Legal Studies Forum*, and elsewhere. He won the 2009 Amy Tritesch Needle Award, the 2016 Petracca Award, was a finalist for the Joie de Vivre book prize, has been nominated for Best of the Net, and is on *Philadelphia Stories'* editorial board. He lives in Media, PA with poet and professor Courtney Bambrick.

**12<sup>th</sup> Grade Judge**  
**Ray Greenblatt**

Winning a Fourth Grade Short Story Writing Contest, Ray Greenblatt was spurred to continue writing more stories, poems, essays, plays, and even a novel. He earned a B.A. in English Literature at Eastern University and an M.A. in American Literature at the University of New Hampshire. He taught English to 7th-12th grade for over 40 years. He won the Mad Poets Annual Poetry Contest and was nominated three times for the Pushcart Prize. He has at present written 10,000 poems and recently wrote a book review for the Dylan Thomas Society.