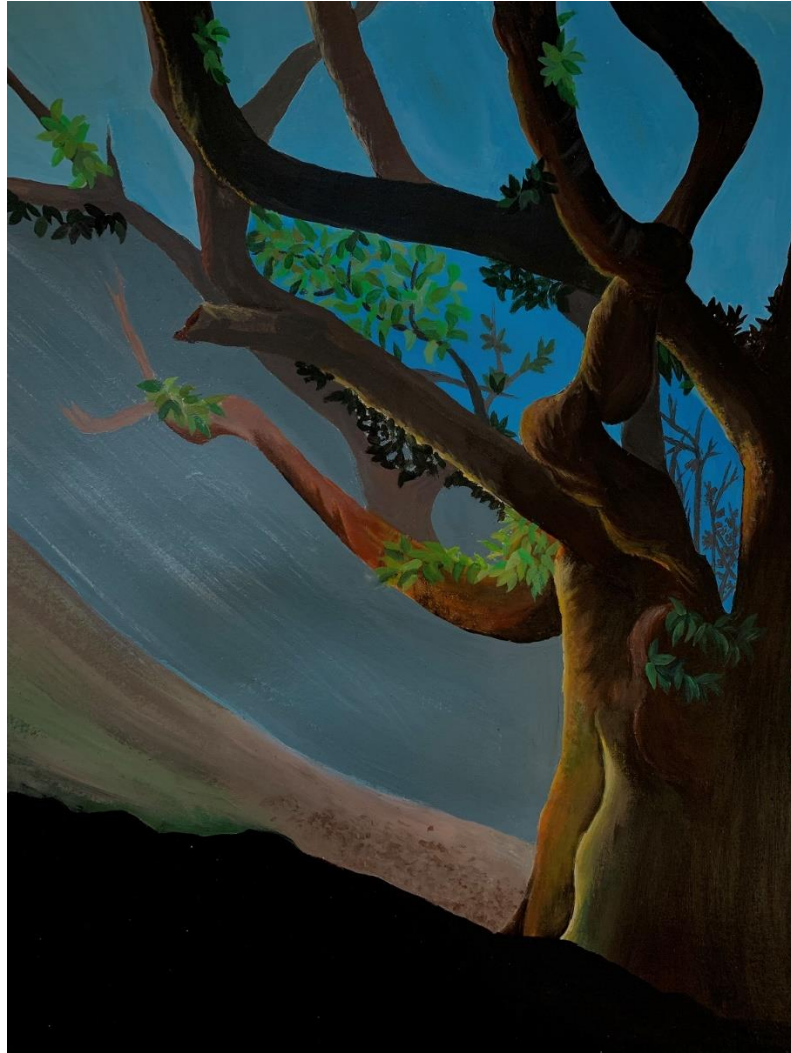


Young Poets of Delaware County 2022 Contest Winners



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**Delaware County Libraries, Mad Poets Society,
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**Cover art: Deep in the Woods by Aashna Pandey
2022 Teen Art Contest Winner**

Young Poets of Delaware County
Contest Winners 2022

First Grade Winners

1st Place
My Miracle
Emily Bogardus
Lakeview Elementary School

2nd Place
Dreams
Elliott Egan
Homeschool

3rd Place
Humans
Colin Rusek
Our Lady of Angels Regional Catholic School

Second Grade Winners

1st Place
The Scary Bumblebee Dream!
Chika Onyeachu
Loomis Elementary School

2nd Place
Flowers
Marin McCampbell
Saint Mary Magdalen School

3rd Place
Snowy Day
Arria Pohl
Our Lady of Angels Regional Catholic School

Third Grade Winners

1st Place
I Am
Harrison Scott
Garrettford Elementary School

2nd Place
The Cherry Blossom Tree
Olivia Tien
Loomis Elementary School

3rd Place
Feeling Free
Michael MacAdam
Worrall Elementary School

Fourth Grade Winners

1st Place
Cry
Wesleigh Robin Staneivezius
Wayne Elementary School

2nd Place
Question
Kylie Thomas
Rose Tree Elementary School

3rd Place
The Marble
Adrianna Ho
Wallingford Elementary School

Fifth Grade Winners

1st Place

The Monster

Raina Simon

Wallingford Elementary School

2nd Place

Untitled

Suleiman Mahku

The Haverford School

3rd Place

Craft Time (Big Mess)

Katie Mackey

Pennell Elementary School

Sixth Grade Winners

1st Place

Every Day

Danica Linsky

E. T. Richardson Middle School

2nd Place

Chains of Guilt

Ameya Singh

Garnet Valley Middle School

3rd Place

The Horrors of War

Nicholas Burkat

Garnet Valley Middle School

Seventh Grade Winners

1st Place

My Swing

Zayna Alrez

Springton Lake Middle School

2nd Place

The Angler

Michael Noon

Notre Dame de Lourdes School

3rd Place

Addicted

Yemi Kolawole

Notre Dame de Lourdes

Eighth Grade Winners

1st Place

Your Perfect Picture

Ciara O'Neill

Springton Lake Middle School

2nd Place

Running

Danny O'Brien

Notre Dame de Lourdes School

3rd Place

1812

Anrui Xu

Radnor Middle School

Ninth Grade Winners

1st Place

Reflections of Her Father
Emma Larsen
Wilmington Friends School

2nd Place

The Book of Life
Lilly Kirkpatrick
Penncrest High School

3rd Place

Talk to the Stars Instead
Charley Zimmerman
Penncrest High School

Tenth Grade Winners

1st Place

Cider
Aaron Tang
Episcopal Academy

2nd Place

Far, Far Away
Rosmy Joseph
Springfield High School

3rd Place

Things of Spring
Jacob Cunrod
Cardinal O'Hara High School

Eleventh Grade Winners

1st Place

I Want You, America
Riley Signor
Penncrest High School

2nd Place

back when tigers used to smoke
Lindsay McBride
Academy of Notre Dame

3rd Place

In Awe of Hawaii
Chloe Griffiths
Penncrest High School

Twelfth Grade Winners

1st Place

the search
Grace Curry
Cardinal O'Hara High School

2nd Place

The Galaxy Within Us
Sophia Lenderman
Penncrest High School

3rd Place

Currency of Current Times
Aya Houssein
Springfield High School

**Emily Bogardus
Grade 1
Lakeview Elementary School
First Place**

My Miracle

My miracle is goofiness.
I help babies not cry.

I see rooms of the house
And all the people in it.

I smell the amazing flowers
That Isabella makes.
Luisa's donkeys smell
Like mushrooms.

I hear the pretty music
And the quiet rats in the walls.

I feel happy because
I have a miracle.

**Elliott Egan
Grade 1
Homeschool
Second Place**

Dreams

It's time for bed.

In my dream:

Through the woods,

 In the trees,

After dark -

The stars

Sang a song

 While I discovered

 In a lake

 My friend, the moon.

**Colin Rusek
Grade 1
Our Lady of Angels Regional
Catholic School
Third Place**

Humans

Humans
Black, Pearl
Playing, Listening
Talking
Happy for Friends
People

**Chika Onyeachu
Grade 2
Loomis Elementary School
First Place**

The Scary Bumblebee Dream!

Bumblebees, Bumblebees, I see their hive
Bumblebees, Bumblebees, wait why are they coming out?
Bumblebees, Bumblebees chasing me!
Bumblebees, Bumblebees Oh no I fell!
Bumblebees, Bumblebees, wait do I see a wasp?
Bumblebees, Bumblebees, Oh no they're coming to me!
Bumblebees, Bumblebees, I think this is the end...
Bumblebees, Bumblebees, a bee flew into my hair!

Bumblebees, Bumblebees, wait this was a dream?
Bumblebees, Bumblebees, I'm never going outside again!
And if I ever have to go outside...
I will make sure to wear a suit that people use
to not get stung by bumblebees!

**Marin McCampbell
Grade 2
Saint Mary Magdalen School
Second Place**

Flowers

Sunflowers are yellow. Azaleas are white.

Why can't I see flowers at night?

Tulips are purple. Lilies are pink.

But unlike skunks, flowers don't stink.

Daisies are orange. Orchids are black.

I see all the potted plants on a rack.

Blue bells are blue. Ferns are green.

What a pretty, colorful scene.

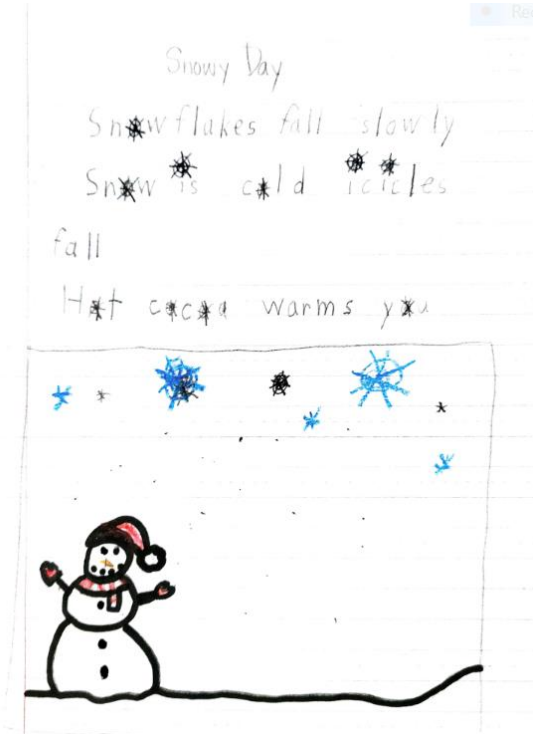
Lamb's ear is gray. Roses are red.

I can dream about all the flowers in my bed.

Arria Pohl
Grade 2
Our Lady of Angels Regional
Catholic School
Third Place

Snowy Day

Snowflakes fall slowly
Snow is cold, icicles fall
Hot Cocoa warms you



**Harrison Scott
Grade 3
Garrettford Elementary School
First Place**

I am

I am a strong mountain,
longing to be climbed

A bird in an egg,
ready to shine

I am a door,
never to be opened

A fierce huge giant,
Never to be doubted

I am a core of an apple,
holding together life

**Olivia Tien
Grade 3
Loomis Elementary School
Second Place**

The Cherry Blossom Tree

The cherry blossom tree
sits in the garden grass with beauty and grace.
Filled with flowers, bushes, and vines and a small tree.
A light wind blows by, some flowers blow off the cherry blossom,
but still keeps its grace. You sit on a bench and hear birds chirp and tweet
and think to yourself, it is a calm and peaceful place, as a bunny scurries into a bush.
As the trees sway, you feel comfort and sniff the air, the nice flower smell.
You decide to go near the pond and look at the fish then see a little cottage.
It looks like a Japanese tea house. You see a lady in a kimono,
she offers you tea and you accept despite your thirst
As you
walk out
of the
teahouse
and sit
on the bench
take a look at
your watch
and realize
it is almost night and walk home.

Michael MacAdam
Grade 3
Worrall Elementary School
Third Place

Feeling Free

One day I was walking outside.
I was feeling free.
I heard the the crunch of the leaves,
the chirps of the birds, and the buzzing
of the bees.
I was feeling free.
I saw the shimmering shining sun,
and it was at that special moment that this free day had just begun.
Then I saw the whistling wind
blowing hard on the leaves
I saw the fluttering
butterflies staring right at me.
I was feeling free.
I watch the flowers growing
I hopped over a fence and kept going and going.
I was feeling free.
Smelling the luscious air.
It was like a dream, but I was really there.
I was feeling free.
Hearing the basketballs bounce. The defenders were like a panther
ready to pounce.
I was feeling free.
Hearing the fresh creek flow.
I was ready for the sun to set. I was on the go.
I was feeling free.
Watching the sunset by the bay
I am very very thankful for this amazing day.

**Wesleigh Robin Staneivezius
Grade 4
Wayne Elementary School
First Place**

Cry

My dry brown eyes begin to drip,
every blink and every squint leads to a drip, drip, drip, drip.
Then suddenly the small drops begin to expand
until the small drops begin to disappear onto the floor.
Just then more drops begin to form like a leaky faucet,
but this isn't a job for a plumber,
because it's caused by a broken heart.
I can hear my heart thumping,
I can feel it breaking.
Smash, smash, smash
until there is no more thump,
no more smash, it's gone,
my most delicate and beautiful piece of art...is gone.
More delicate than money
more delicate than anything a human could ever own...is gone.
My heart had love,
my heart had kindness,
and most importantly...my heart had me.

**Grade 4
Kylie Thomas
Rose Tree Elementary
Second Place**

Question

I promise I wasn't asking you
About that creepy reflection
I wasn't asking you
But I guess you misunderstood
And you're still awesome
My aunt told me poems must have
Alliteration and metaphors
I wish you could go tell her
All the things you said earlier today
About poems not needing
Rhymes and metaphors
And yes, I understand that if one day
I'm a very famous and well-known person
I will have to write my lines
Very long to the people that email me
But in the meantime, I can write my lines

Short, Short
Short
If I want to

I write my lines like this so people know where to stop and take breaths without me having to put commas and stuff

**Adrianna Ho
Grade 4
Wallingford Elementary School
Third Place**

The Marble

I have a marble
Shiny and new
It makes racket when it's thrown
And bounces
Until it can't bounce
And it rolls on the ground
Like a dancer doing contemporary
Moving with the light
And the breeze
And the weather
Like waves on a beach
The marble swirls in the middle
Like rain
And makes a ticking sound
Like a sick cricket
Trying to chirp
And flies through the sky
Like an umbrella on a cold windy day
Flying high, high, high,
Into the sky
And falls
Because of gravity
The marble gives up
And doesn't make ticking tantrums anymore
It is silent like a cat jumping from a cabinet
Onto the floor
This is my marble
Shiny and new

**Raina Simon
Grade 5
Wallingford Elementary School
First Place**

The Monster

In the middle of the night
When you're fast asleep
A monster that lives under your bed will weep
And wonder why you fear it so
All that monster wants is a friend you know
Under that bed alone with nothing to do
Out of all people it could stay with
It chose you
It would make conversation if it weren't so shy
But if you saw him you'd surely cry
Yes he is ugly on the outside
And he may need a shower
But if you could see all he has done for you
You would think he was beautiful
Like a flower.
He catches your nightmares and locks them in a jar
Then he turns them in to sweet dreams
that glow like stars
Then he places them carefully back into your mind
So you can sleep peacefully and find
Your way back to the real world.
Night after night
Dream after dream
He longs for attention but never is seen
But he will stay with you
Until the end
Because the thought of having you as a friend
Keeps him going.
So in the middle of the night
When you feel alone and afraid
Remember all the people who left you,
But know that monster stayed.

Suleiman Mahku
Grade 5
The Haverford School
Second Place

What Does My Skin Say to You?

What does my skin say to you?
Does it say I am sun kissed or exotic? From a land of water blue?
Or does it say I'm despicable simply because of my hue?
Tell me, what does my skin say to you?

I look caked in mud, or rather thick gooey molasses.
My skin speaks louder than I can to the masses.
Unchangeable, permanent, darker in the sun
It shows up before me, like a loud party animal looking for fun.

Just what does my skin say about me to you?
Does it taint me, make me smaller, my words less true?
Does it shout ? Does it scream even louder than my voice?
Do you understand that it's a covering and not a choice?

What images does my skin conjure up in your head?
Am I a boogie man, monster? Or a banshee instead?
Am I a threat? A menace? Strange fruit to be hung from a tree
Or am I a token? A symbol of diversity?
I am a boy, a child, 10 to be exact
I am kind, I am loving, can't you see that?
My skin is an organ, a vessel that holds my dreams
Like saving the world one day, or making unsplitable pants seams.
Let me speak for myself, dare to look deeper
See that my skin is merely my organs' keeper
Dig even deeper, I bleed red white and blue
Does my skin say any of that to you?

Grade 5
Katie Mackey
Pennell Elementary School
Third Place

Craft Time (Big Mess)

Before you read this, I would like to inform you that nobody got in trouble in the making of this poem.

Time to carve a pumpkin face
A birthday card
A bird's new happy place
Time to make someone smile
When you make
Something? (it's supposed to be a crocodile)
You will use lots of art supplies
Markers, Crayons, Glitter!
Don't tell though, it's a surprise
AHH!
There's glue on the floor
Glitter on my pants and many places more
I don't think we have anymore happy faces
There's brown paint spilled everywhere
Oh my gosh the newspapers tore!
Now there's paint everywhere!
Do not fret we'll clean it up
Grab the dustpan and the broom
The vacuum too
Don't you worry, the house will be cleaned soon!
The art time was a bit of a miss (and mess)
But at least we tried our best
At least we're not in trouble...
yet.

Grade 6
Danica Linsky
E.T. Richardson Middle School
First Place

Every Day

Every day I wake up to the same droning alarm clock.
The same bland bowl of cereal.
The same routine bus ride.
Nothing seems to change in the morning.

Every day I wander through the same project-lined halls.
The same familiar classrooms.
The same crumbling pathways.
Nothing seems to change at school.

Every day I sigh as I work on the same procrastinated homework.
The same annoying video game level.
The same almost-perfect meal.
Nothing seems to change at home.

Repetition is like a bee; a bee doing the same job every day until death.
Will there ever be a new flower in this garden full of monotony?

I walk down the stairs on this dull morning
I expect the same thorns that I greet every day
Pulling open the curtains, I see something unforeseen
What is this bud? It's Unique, I've never seen this before!

I step outside backpack in hand.
The grass appears greener, the sky appears brighter.
I look around and spot something new.
My garden is expanding? How can this be?

I greet the bus driver with a smile on my face
I sit next to someone new; we talk for a while
When I arrive at school, I wave to classmates.
So many new buds are sprouting and growing! More joy, new life. I feel great!

As I walk down those halls
I see and appreciate what I couldn't before.
Beautiful handmade posters that took time and effort
Just like my garden, the projects took a lot of care.

At home, I immediately finish homework.
I sit up and see even more buds! A new bud for accomplishing something!
A little pinch of salt and let's taste
Mhm! With practice came a perfect meal.

I had fun today; I made new friends.
I appreciated more; I frowned less.
The more happiness I show, the more flowers grow
My garden is growing, and I won't stop now.

Repetition is like a bee doing the same job until death.
Don't let dull life tear you down; stop and take a breath.
See the world as a garden, sprouting with new life
Live life to the fullest; Enjoy every last bit.

Ameya Singh
Grade 6
Garnet Valley Middle School
Second Place

Chains of Guilt

Guilt is a beast
Its ferocious jaws open
Your boat dancing on its tongue
Destined to sink
Every moment
Every day
But it'll wait
It'll wait until you mess up and
Devour you whole

It'll start with your heart
Then your soul
Finally, your dreams
Bit by bit until it's satisfied
It'll spit you out as if you're bitter
But when you go to pick up the pieces of yourself

The puzzle is broken
You're forever plagued
Plagued by the agony, grief, and anguish
No, you're not free of the monster yet
It holds you back with deathly chains
To restrain you from reshaping yourself
Restraining you from making the puzzle fit

From happiness
It'll haunt you at every decision
Telling you
"You're not good enough"

And

"Why are you even trying"

With

"Nobody likes you"

You contemplate everything

Sent into the spiral of darkness

And wallow away spinning in confusion

But

Let the guilt be your light

Let the guilt be your teacher

Let it be the sun shining upon you

And don't make it your disability

Sprout leaves and grow tall, my friend

And break the chains of guilt

And break the chains of guilt

**Nicholas Burkat
Grade 6
Garnet Valley Middle School
Third Place**

The Horrors of War

We all thirst for peace and for brotherhood
Longing for peace is a mighty desire
Alas, our cries are never understood

When soldiers sacrifice their livelihood
And innocents are caught in the crossfire
We all thirst for peace and brotherhood

An enemy of peace and of all things good
War is all consuming; a raging fire
Alas, our cries are never understood

If you can doesn't mean you should
The land peppered with mines; miles of barbed wire
We all thirst for peace and for brotherhood

Children moving to adulthood
The cause of the silence is the gunfire
Alas, our cries are never understood

If there was something I could do I would
So millions of people wouldn't expire
We all thirst for peace and for brotherhood
Alas, our cries are never understood

Zayna Alrez
Grade 7
Springton Lake Middle School
First Place

My Swing

The swing dances
 As the breeze picks up speed
It twists and turns
 Above sticks and weeds

Thousands of ants crawl aimlessly upon the roots
 Of the large and twisty sycamore tree
I run to the swing, with dirt on my boots
 And rush to get in the air

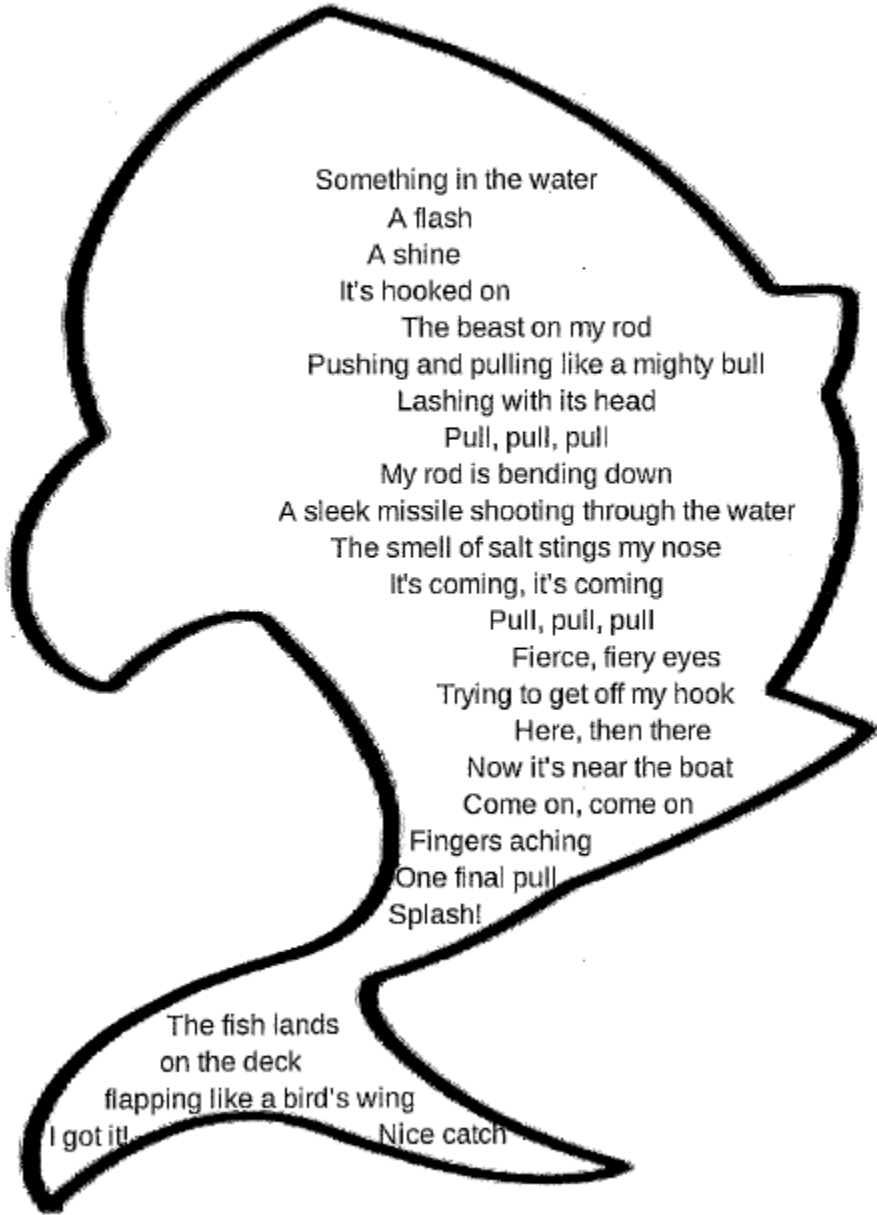
 The swing dances
As the tree squeaks
 And the smell of fresh cut grass fills my nose
I notice my garden blooming, with tulips and a rose

I fly high
Like a bird in the sky
And float like a rain cloud
I am a kite
 I am an eagle
 I am a plane

My stomach jumps
As I swing back and forth
And slowly
 come
 to
 a
 stop

Michael Noon
Grade 7
Notre Dame de Lourdes School
Second Place

The Angler



Something in the water
A flash
A shine
It's hooked on
The beast on my rod
Pushing and pulling like a mighty bull
Lashing with its head
Pull, pull, pull
My rod is bending down
A sleek missile shooting through the water
The smell of salt stings my nose
It's coming, it's coming
Pull, pull, pull
Fierce, fiery eyes
Trying to get off my hook
Here, then there
Now it's near the boat
Come on, come on
Fingers aching
One final pull
Splash!

The fish lands
on the deck
flapping like a bird's wing
I got it! Nice catch

Yemi Kolawole
Grade 7
Notre Dame de Lourdes School
Third Place

ADDICTED

you can't let it go, can you
you try
you try
but you need it
(right?)
every breath without it is like a breath without lungs
nothing
nothing without the (in)security it gives you
an (over)heated blanket around your shoulders
swallowed whole
(a black abyss
the darkness is blinding
suffocating
smothered like a candle with no oxygen
doused in the frigid tongues of peer pressure)
check
check for new trends
new beauty standards
for what you need to fix about yourself
(do you even need fixing?)
check for what is new
old
acceptable
embarrassing
rely on someone else's words to decide what you do with your own life
lost in an ever churning sea of mindless scrolling for
minutes
hours
days
you're drowning
in the vast ocean of social media
this your life
life is what we make it
will it change
can it change
(can you change?)

Ciara O'Neill
Grade 8
Springton Lake Middle School
First Place

Your Perfect Picture

I put my life in
your picture
I frame it in
your frame

Perfectly angled
Perfectly formed
Perfectly yours

I am your
masterpiece.
You are my
tragedy.

**Danny O'Brien
Grade 8
Notre Dame de Lourdes School
Second Place**

Running

Running

Everything in life runs,

It may be a car or a computer,

It may be your mind or your body,

You may say it in different ways but you can say anything runs.

In my life especially, everything always runs,

My mind is always moving and always thinking,

But once my body starts to run,

My mind can finally stop.

When I run I let loose like a cannon,

My feet become one with the ground as one foot goes up and the other down,

I can feel my body change and it feels like a cloud floating in the sky,

My mind becomes like a bird in an open cage, empty and free,

Every bad thought or feeling is gone and my mind is released of its burden.

Anrui Xu
Grade 8
Radnor Middle School
Third Place

1812

Gold, God, and glory are all they fearlessly fight for
glamour, glee, going grandly with the grimness of gore
A brawl set in motion by a lofty leader and drama in the ocean
known as Napoleonic maritime theatre, now a most costly devotion
It seems that brazen bitterness tore this poor continent apart and to shreds
in a mess of prideful hearts and important heads, of merry shifts in time and tide
with nary a temporary drift to the wary emperor's favor or side

Regardless, with regards addressed to the navy of Bull John, attempting to recuperate
sailors abandoning their valor on the waves as, in the hull's hole, conditions deteriorate
In the United States, decisions to blockade duplicate, cue tight friendships being severed
neutral trade stances' failure, further fracturing stasis and alliances, eclipsing economic
endeavors

The press gang arrives, claims some lives, presses on, capturing every pawn
devastating expatriates, some unfortunate souls in the marine oasis, with basis but a crumb
in debt, many join the unseen death tolls, the ill-fated Chesapeake outcome

Cries for reprisal grow with woes and American scorn on the streets, "How dare?"
Congress wonders, asunder torn, in stress, and in heated debate as the fair tempers flare
Lose an ally's contribution, draw a rival's cold wrath? In fragile geopolitics
why is this democratic nation so riled, controlled by their conflicts?
How can we regress to the terrors of the Revolutionary Era bloodbath, should war be waged?
Why are diplomatic communications not improving the desperation
or resolving, circumventing our dire government situation?

At the center, War Hawks further fan the flames for fun
drown out dissenters' distraught pleas for peace, until James, Washington's mad son
for better or worse, a cursed composer in his silent land of candlelight, letters, and ink
initiates the fight, realization still not dawned, plummeting over the hill's summit, beyond the
brink

Was it justified? I asked the universe and it thus replied:

"I sense he must have sighed, tried to trust the wide and wicked world, overturned and churned
He yearned, and so became one of the men who wish to watch all of reality be burned."

**Grade 9
Emma Larsen
Wilmington Friends School
First Place**

Reflections of Her Father

Snow flying in the air.

Sinking into her pale flushed skin.

White specks

In her hair.

The deep winter season, of cold, slow months

Yet to begin.

A field that used to be filled with yellow bristle grass,

Is now covered with snow, whiter than clouds.

All the fresh snow that indents her skin,

And frosts her freshly silked lips,

Closes her off to the world around.

How could something so cold and brutal,

Ever touch a warm heart,

Then force it cold.

Watching her catch crystals on her tongue,

Laughing in a blank field,

As I hide behind a tree,

Wishing to feel the bliss that she owns.

Her eyes glisten,
And her hair flows.
Through the trees to me
Her bliss goes.

Time passes,
Before I can ponder
Of the mistakes I made,
So long ago.
For, to miss out on such emotion
Has never felt so low.

Whereas I,
So desolate, and shallow,
Could never feel such bliss.
But nobody would ever know, A father,
like I, reached such an abyss.

Lilly Kirkpatrick
Grade 9
Penncrest High School
Second Place

The Book of Life

As I stare back into the clouded world of my past self,

I turn each painful chapter back
Ashamed of the rectangle void I created in my drooping shelf.
Eyeing the dusted pages,
Causing the silent storm in my heart,
Memories claw their way back into my mind for the first time in ages.

My stomach hugs itself into knots
Each time I fathom,
Trying to read my old thoughts
Like they're new again.

To turn these pages,
As if I had just written them,
To feel the life in them draining
From my body
Like when I felt you cut
The last strands of love
That was maintaining
The hope in me to stay
Just a little while longer.

With you, I seemed to write in color.

With you, my words felt like a songbird,
Chirping harmonies that only we had the ears to hear.
Tranquil and simple, every line you blurred
But as complex and unique as you could ever imagine,
The songs laced with painful sin,
The feeling
Of a warm spring day against your skin.

This chapter's long to an extent

But I wish it lasted forever,
As it remains in my heart
That you severed.

Each page you paint a picture in my mind,
Harsh unforgiving blues,
The softness of lilacs and sage that you have to focus to find.

You showed me the depths of my deepest valleys
Held me up to see the potential of my highest mountains,
The same peaks,
That seem to grow further and further,
Each time I dare to peek
How near i've become.

Without you my pages fade dark,

My colors dull,

The only image my words paint is an unrecognizable version of myself,
Far from whole,
Who could never,
Seem to survive in a universe,
Without the promise of your warm soul
Standing alongside mine.

Sometimes I wish I stopped writing.

Maybe then I could've lived our chapter forever.

Charley Zimmerman
Grade 9
Penncrest High School
Third Place

Talk to the Stars Instead

There's warmth in silence,
When left to my own devices.
A time of still, A time to think -
Take breaths in jagged slices.

I lay on my back and count the stars,
Infinite miles away.
The stars are full of quiet and peace,
Far from the world where I stay.

The stars would understand
If they lived and could talk.
Someone to tell my secrets to,
Stand beside me while I walk.

Brains clash with brains.
When with others, I'm afraid.
What if something awful is said?
Good intentions gone astray.

My thoughts are getting louder,
I'm staying awake to think.
A choppy wave, a rugged wake,
I mustn't tip over the brink.

I'd rather stay far away
From all the many mistakes.
But it's hard to become a ghost, a hermit;
I need to hide behind drapes.

So I lay on my back and talk to the stars.
The stars understand.
The stars are forgiving and quiet;
While I'm crying, they hold my hand.

Aaron Tang
Grade 10
Episcopal Academy
First Place

Cider

I rest my ruddy cheek on the school bus window,
which is drenched with condensation and melting frost.
My hands grip the cuffs of my sweatshirt like they're gloves,
as I step onto the soft carpet of leaves.
We leap for the apples like the top shelf of our cubbies,
and exhale vapor, pretending to puff cigarette smoke.
Our baskets are jammed with green and red ornaments,
our high-pitched laughing circles around treetops.
Inside the plant, we huddle in excitement,
and toss the colorful harvest into the giant apple juicer.
Mrs. Benson puts her index figure on the big black button,
We sacredly shout a countdown, as if a spaceship is launching.
The juicer storms a swirl of pinkness,
Apples instantly disappear.
The day's harvest will be rewarded, but the pitcher only yields
a thin stream of cider into our dixie cups.
We gulp it and wait for more. But none ever comes.
Back inside the classroom, our hands are numb,
red, and bruised.
Mrs. Benson speeds to turn the heater on,
and we take turns sipping at the water fountain,
lips still parched.
Today, I open my shining aluminum fridge and take out
a gallon jug of cider.
I drink straight from the carton,
no dixie cups,
no limit,
no apples picked.

**Rosmy Joseph
Grade 10
Springfield High School
Second Place**

Far, Far Away

I wanted to ride far away, adventuring at sea,
So I walked out to my ocean-boat, and took my coat with me.

I was sailing on an ocean-boat
Far, far away
And I found an old man stranded on an island
Far, far away

I asked him, "Good, Sir? Have you lost your way?"
And he said back, "Not a chance, I got what I need today."

I asked him, "What you got that you needed desperately?"
He said, "I got my arms, my back, my head, and my two feet."

I told him, "But we all have those,"
And he said, "Not a chance."

He told me, "Be lucky that you can walk cause some surely can't."

I asked him, "But I sailed out here, and that's not walking, see?"
He said, "But you had to walk to get on the boat, surely."

I told him, "You are odd, but you seem to know your way."
He said to me, "Son, I know that, just bring me back, okay?"

So I pulled him into my ocean-boat
Far, far away
I gave him my coat as we moved
Far, far away

And finally, before we parted ways,
Far, far away
The old man told me,
"Thank you, son, you have made my day."

Jacob Cunrod
Grade 10
Cardinal O'Hara High School
Third Place

Things of Spring

Flowers Blooming
Grass Growing
Rain Falling
Sun Shining
Wind Blowing
Bees Buzzing
Birds Chirping
Bunnies Hopping
Butterflies flying
Children Playing
These are things of spring

Riley Signor
Grade 11
Penncrest High School
First Place

I Want You, America

I want you, America
I want you to notice the stereotypes you've created
How this country floods with this equality you speak of
And here I stand, mouth open and parched
Lips cracking, praying for a single drop of water
From a sky that has refused to change since 1776

I want you, America
To walk with me into my beige classroom
With paint chipping off the walls
Come sit with me in my 4x10 row
While I am taught
My value is as high as a test score
Reminded repeatedly that I cannot fail
And there is continuously only one right answer
Stay in line they say, don't question the system

I want you, America
To walk in my shoes
See how powerful a woman can be
Look, don't miss my mother's intelligence

The strength my grandmother holds
The wisdom, that sparkles in my best friend's eyes

I want you, America
All it takes is a glimpse
Do you see everything I have overcome?
Do you think a hearing impairment can silence me?
Because you must be mistaken
I am climbing my mountains America
I won't stop to examine the view
I will be heard

I want you, America
To hear the stories of the people I love
To see the pain you caused in their eyes
At sixteen, they realized that you may never change
We beg you to join our party
The music of our movement is not complex
We simply dance to the sound of equity
I want you, America

Lindsay McBride
Grade 11
Academy of Notre Dame
Second Place

back when tigers used to smoke

according to the *halmeoni* and *hal-abeojis*
of my world
perched on porches
swatting away mosquitoes
drifting off
into the pages

tigers are tobacco enthusiasts
but they really just love stories.
i too
relish in the intoxicants
of cheeseboards in China
lemonade in Laos &
kit-kats in Korea.

the smorgasbord by the stairs
is a vessel to Narnia, a real one
with me and my nonna
traversing the globe as
mini Magellans,
in this ranch as
a rambunctious sea of summer rains.

she roars with each inhale
howling towards the clouded sky
about the latest telenovela
till glasses tip and shatter
then the story trails off and
we wait for the next tiger to
pounce.

Chloe Griffiths
Grade 11
Penncrest High School
Third Place

In Awe of Hawaii

Clear blue water out the plane window, cut by the green mountains.
So close I could reach out of the plane and touch them.
I'm stepping out into a whole new planet, filled with fascinations and wonder.
My eyes fill with astonishment,
While my nose fills with the sweet smell of hibiscus flowers.
I run towards my favorite blue body of water--
Gleaming--teaming with life to the brim.
I feel the soft warm sand squish between my toes
The dry and warm turns to salt and blue,
As I plunge into the sparkling waves.
I dive deeper into the life that this dazzling ocean offers.
I can feel the golden sun kissing back,
As I watch the rainbow of fish swim right under my feet.
I take an excursion into the deep green of the sleeping volcanoes,
The verdant titans guarding the island from peril.
Winding up the small dirt road, I look over the truck's shoulder,
To see the ocean crashing on the tapering rocks at the bottom of the bluffs.
I am in awe of this island from the colossal giants
To the sparkling diamonds surrounding it.
The sun sets on the horizon of the ocean,
Looking bigger as it sinks into the Pacific.
The colors look as if they have been painted on the sky,
Getting deeper and more vibrant as the sun gets closer to hitting the sea.
Palm trees as black silhouettes sway on the vivid colors in the sky.
Aloha, Hawaii.

Grace Curry
Grade 12
Cardinal O'Hara High School
First Place

the search

the questioning stumbling fumbling fool
who knows not the means, nor the themes, nor the tool
to uncover a secret, to follow a rule
that will lead to the end of all time
blindly through darkness he pushes and prods,
facing men who sing menacing hymns to the gods
he has cursed all who stall and traversed all the odds
yet he's found nothing worthy to find
well, of course, there's the lark, and the wren, and the sparrow,
and the crystal white rivers of North, and the tree
that spreads all its branches as far as can be,
upon it a single bird perched
but through all of his travels, his noblest quest
to find what he lacks, he's already been blest
by a beauty so simple, but nevertheless,
his searching gives means to the search

**Sophia Lenderman
Grade 12
Penncrest High School
Second Place**

The Galaxy Within Us

Consumed with the constant need for his promise,
My mind stays full with his gleaming presence.
Why is it he makes me brighter?
I'm like a plant always thirsting for water.
This whole time I've felt enveloped in warmth,
Life thriving under a ball of fire
The sun and moon, we play our parts
Both half a universe, in need of the other
"Forever and forever" he tells me,
"Even if the planets collapse on themselves"
The stars are a countdown of our end,
Counting on and on I remain
In perfect harmony, the worlds erupt
Into an explosion wrapping their smoke
Around every single individual, until we are left
"Even if the planets collapse on themselves"
The stars are never ending, as I float in space
Hand in hand, we explore the limits of existence
In each others' eyes we find ourselves
"Even if the Universe changes its mind"

**Aya Houssein
Grade 12
Springfield High School
Third Place**

Currency of Current Times

Forever is temporary and life is fleeting
Time elapsing without any meaning
Love expires and money remains winning
Lifeless bodies working until evening
Chasing a bag that will never be filled
Missing opportunities of feeling a thrill
Loved ones waiting, relationships anticipating
But nothing compares to the money they're making
Dreading each day in the monotonous cycle
Laborious hours lacking even a smile
Seeing their savings progressively get bigger
No satisfaction despite making six figures
Materialistic behaviors and living in luxury
Always ensuring their pockets aren't empty
They sacrifice their time and happiness for labor
They're miserable yet they're financially stable
Retiring when they can no longer give in
To the economic system that will never win
But now they are older and feeling like failure
Since they devoted their lives to those green sheets of paper.

1st 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.

2nd 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.

3rd 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.

4th 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.

5th 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.

6th 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.

7th 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.

8th Grade Judge
Mike Cohen

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

9th Grade Judge
Amy Barone

(see information above for 3rd grade)

10th 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.

11th 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 Tritsch 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.

12th 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.