



Kennedy Deyo, Grade 7



Bradley Peck, Grade 7

Dover Public Library's 24th Annual Poetry Contest May 2026

We received 314 entries in this year's contest and this booklet contains the winning poems along with artwork graciously provided by Dover Middle School students. Poems were judged in seven categories: grades K-2, 3 & 4, 5 & 6, 7 & 8, 9 & 10, 11 & 12, and adults ages 18 and older.

We would like to thank our judges for 2026:

Marcia Goodnow
Lesley Hocking
Donna McAdam
Shane Morin
Jessica Purdy

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Mirabel Kellogg, Grade 6

There Once was a Rover

Rover woke up in darkness
in a freezing red land with creatures surrounding her.
Creatures started whispering in a language
she could not understand.
It sounded like air moving through her ear.
One of them was brave and quietly moved up to her.
It spoke gibberish.
She looked up.
A burning ball of gas appeared in her eye.
She looked the other way.
Lights, water, and greenness appeared.
She wanted to get there so
she was going to find rocks to build a rocket ship.
Very quickly she found as many as she needed
and shaped them into a rocket ship.
She said "I need an engine and company."
She was going to find the green creatures.
But after miles she could not.
But she did come upon a ginormous mountain!
She couldn't even get close to seeing the top!
She decided to risk what could be up there.
She climbed for one month.
Second month, getting cold, starting to see tiny bugs.
Third month, getting tired, wanting to go to sleep



Left: Violet Pellman, Grade 6



Right: Crew Flynn, Grade 6

Nolan Lynch, Grade 7



but knowing it would double the number of months.
Fourth month, can barely see the top.
Fifth month, finally getting there.
She paused the moment she got there.
She saw a spinning sphere
that looked like the planet that had greenness. She touched it
and it teleported her!
On the planet she walked around
and remembered the person who made her.
She sprinted to him.
He recognized her.
They were joyfull!

Piper Joyce, Grade 7



Max Flaherty, 1st place
Category K-2, Grade 2



Emily Pitts, Grade 6

Me And My Brother 

My name is Urvish
I have a brother
Who is five years younger
We like to hug each other

I go to school
He stays at home with dad
When I come back
He is no more sad 😊

I like to eat Cheetos
He likes Fritos
We both like apple sauce
Please don't judge

We go to bed together
He is an early riser
He wakes me up for school
I am very grateful

We both are handsome
Our mother always says
We are the best gifts
That god gave

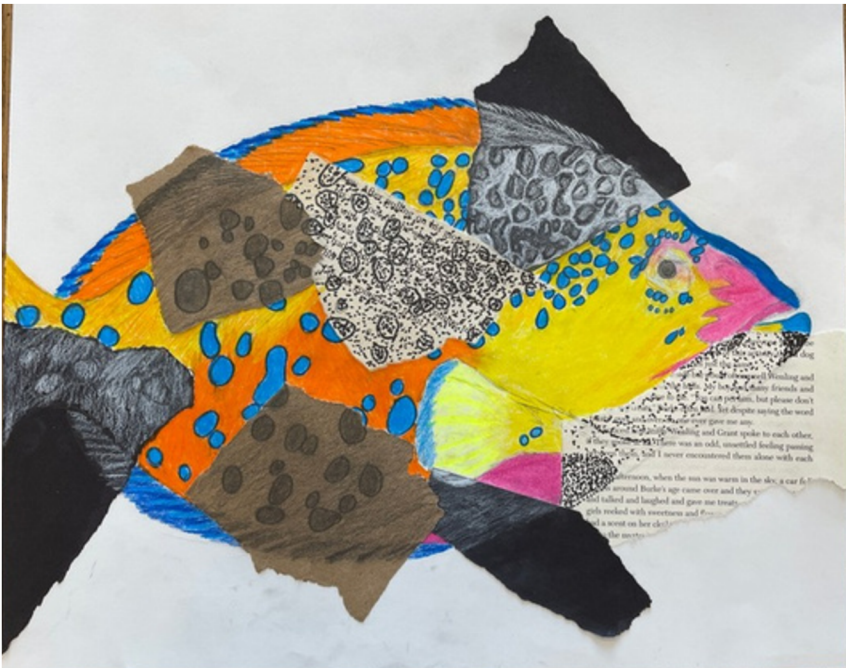
I have the best brother
I love him forever.

Urvish Man Karki, 2nd place
Category K-2, Kindergarten

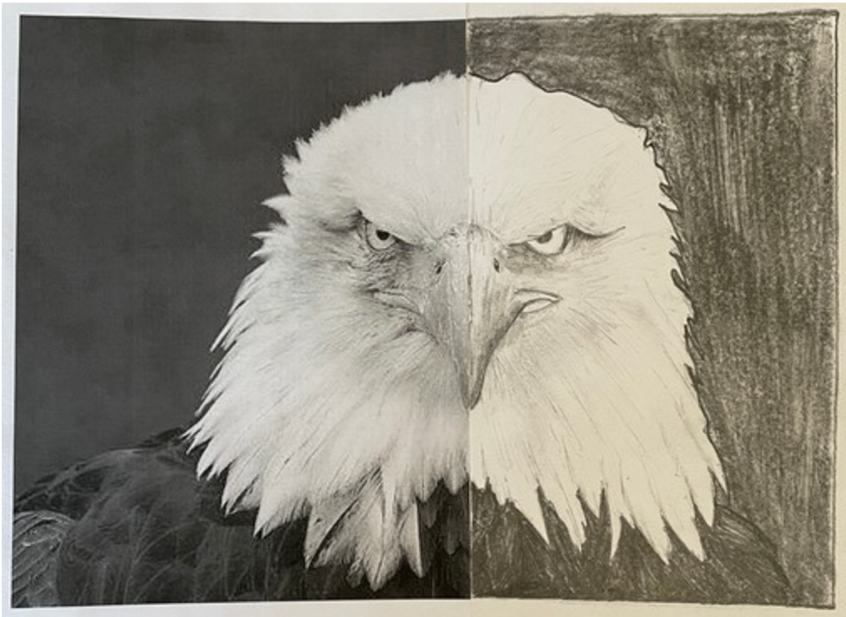
Evelyn Chisamore, Grade 8



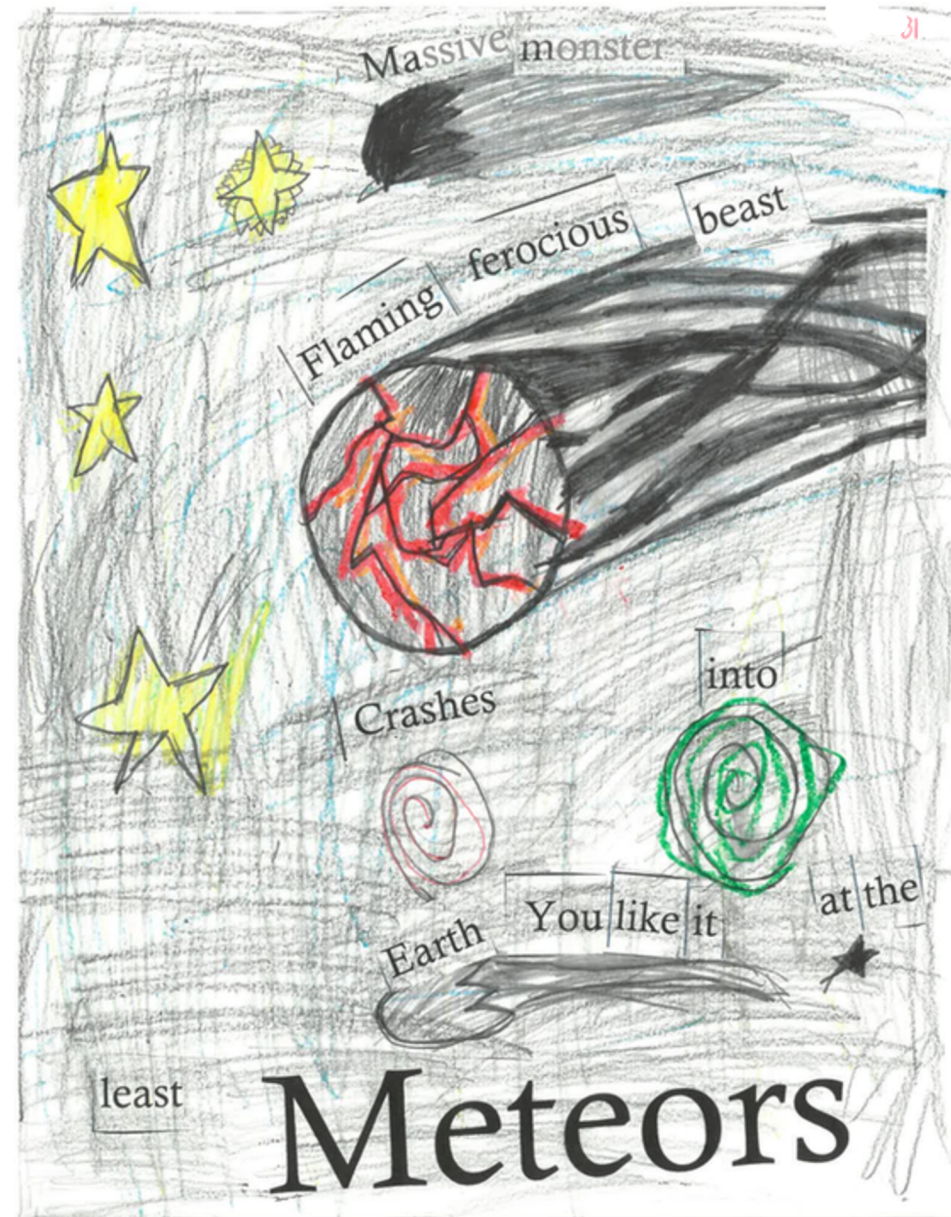
Cam Scott, Grade 8



Noelle Noddin, Grade 8



Caleb Carrel, Grade 6



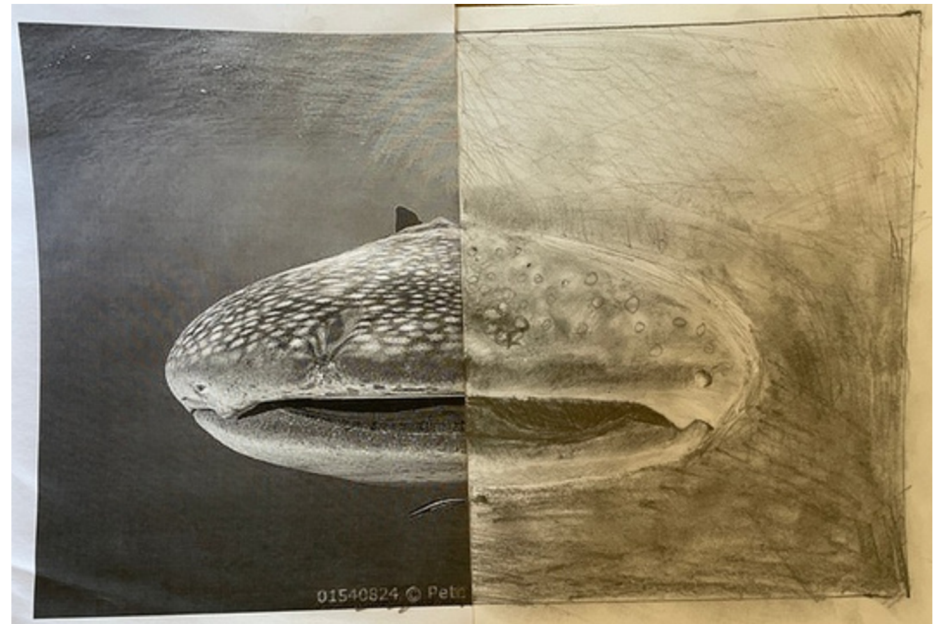
Winston MacDermid, 3rd place
Category K-2, Grade 2

Hedgehogs

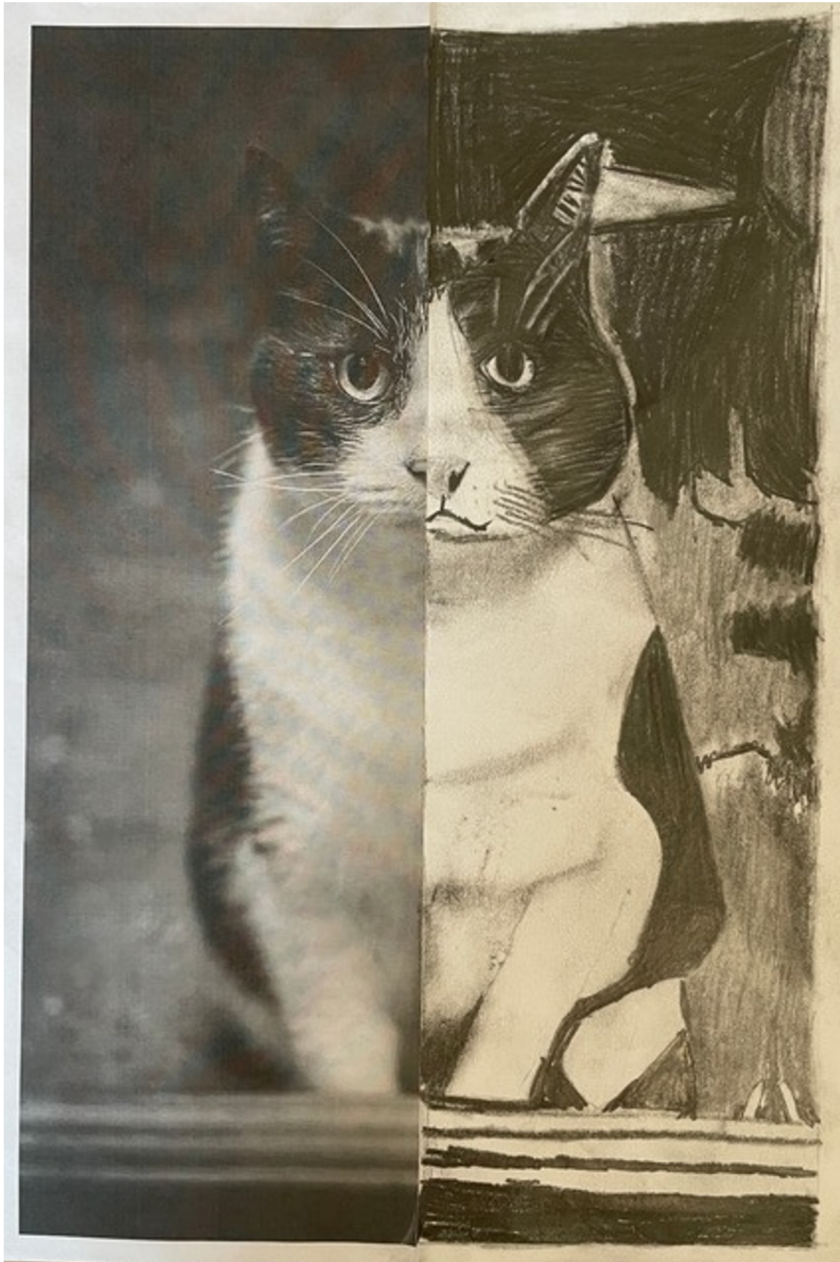
*Cute little animals
Love to run on wheels
Nocturnal little guys
Who will munch on a lunch of berries
They run like delightful little cheetahs
Cutest creature to ever exist*



Carmela Henning, Honorable Mention
Category K-2, Grade 2



Gibby Bonner, Grade 6



Douglas Carter, Grade 6

If I Had a Pet

If I had a pet goldfish,
I would watch him every day.

If I had a dolphin,
I would love to let him play.

If I had a dog,
I would always be at the store.

If I had a cat,
I would never love him more.

If I had a hedgehog,
I would be drawing pictures all the time.

If I had a mountain goat,
I would show him my dime.

If I had a jellyfish,
I would watch him sting animals I don't like.

If I had a porcupine,
I would watch out for his spike.

If I had a lion,
I would always feed him meat.

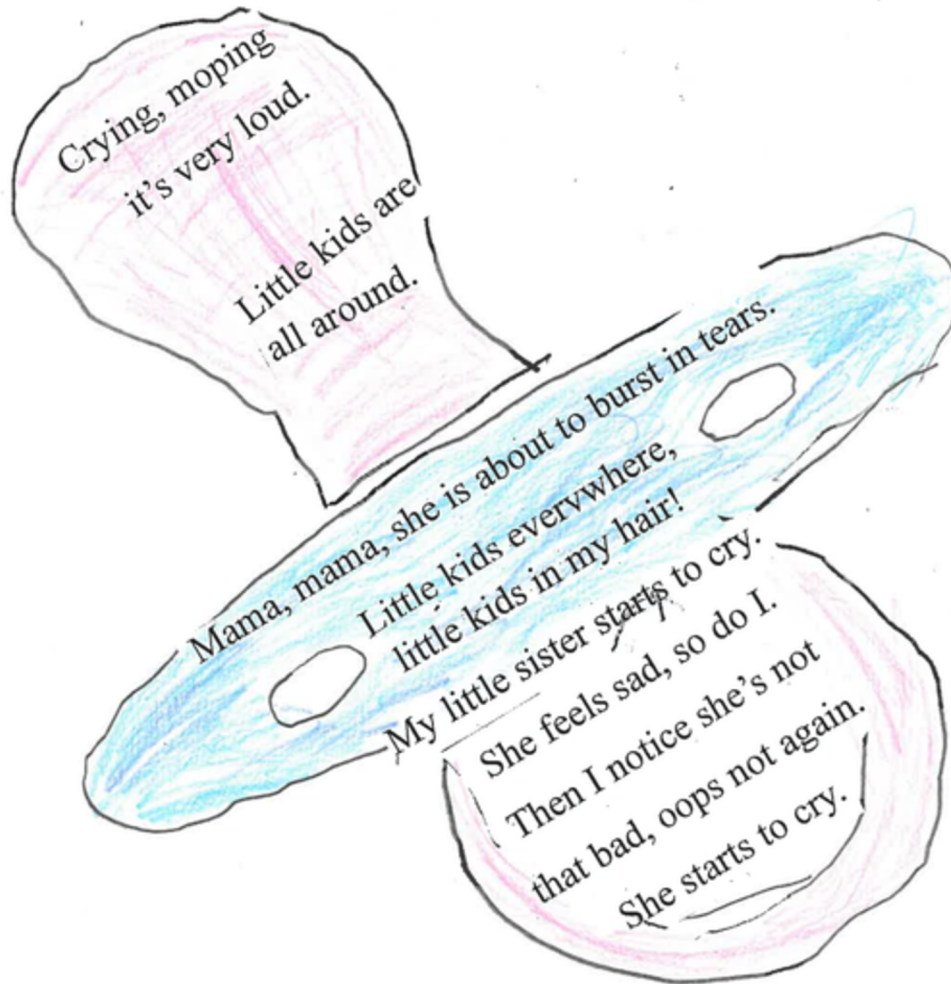
If I had a parrot,
I would give him a treat.

If I had a koala,
I would give him leaves to eat.

If I had a bird,
I would love to watch him tweet.

Quinn Swanson, Honorable Mention
Category K-2, Grade 2

Little Kids



Iris Walsh, Honorable Mention
Category K-2, Grade 2

Sanjay Pasumponmani Shobanasri, Grade 6



Nathan Crockett, Grade 6

Charlotte Clebak, Grade 5



Hazel Mitrusi, Grade 5

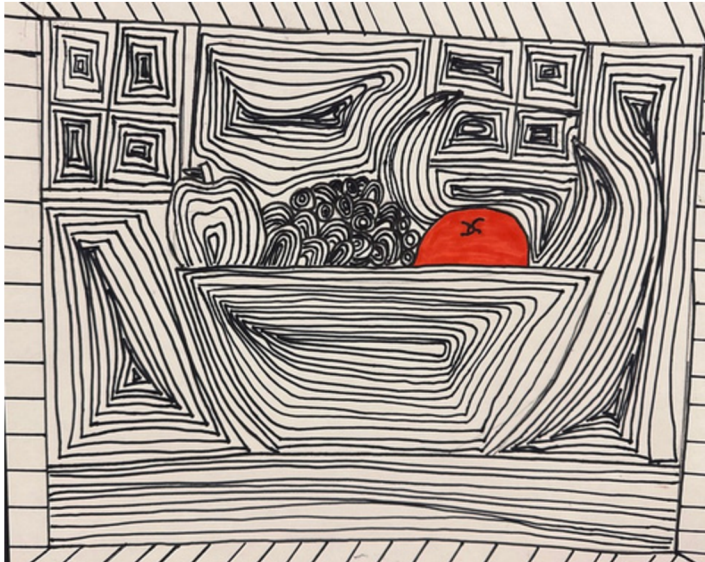


Madison Poulin, Grade 5

Bacon

Slippery, bumpy
Greasy, fatty
Sizzling, bubbling
Brown, buttery
Salty, savory
Bumpy like valley hills
Hot from the pan,
Everyones a fan,
Greasy as can be,
No extra fee

Norah Stancel, 1st place
Category 3 & 4, Grade 4



Mason Craft, Grade 6

Lucy Eschenour, Grade 8



Maggie Elliott, Grade 8

Wildly Alive

I want to say yes to everything,
to feel the curiosity of the universe
burning in my chest.
Each heartbeat, a reminder:
I am here. I am alive.
Shame be damned—
For shame dies when shared in safe spaces.
I want my physical body to be a safe space,
for others yes,
but most importantly for myself.
I want to stop being so cruel to my sweet soul.
Judgement has its time and place,
but these self-judgments
do not know who I am.
They are driven by fear—
and afraid, I am no longer.
I am here. I am alive.
I want to live a life so wildly alive,
full of technicolor sensibilities
bright enough to dazzle
even the darkest of nights.
I'm tired of drifting light-years away,
trapped in anxious realms.
A snap back to reality reminds me:
all we truly have is now.
I am here.
I am alive.
And I want to live
a life so wildly alive.

Ry Friese, Honorable Mention
Category Adult, Dover, NH

Best Friends Are Like

Best friends are like frogs
They hop around together
Best friends are like dogs
They're crazy
Best friends are like monkeys
They hang around each other
Best friends are like flowers
They bloom with each other
Best friends are like bright colors
They're confident around each other
And best friends are their own person
They don't copy each other

Paige LaBreck, 2nd place
Category 3 & 4, Grade 4



Natalie Kellogg, Grade 7

Slithery Snakes

A 100% original poem

Slithering across solid ground.
None need legs to nail getting around.
Anacondas. antagonizing their agonized prey, on the rainforest
floor. their skeletons lay.
King cobras. with poison. constrictor boas. crushing grip.
Eel like smoothness. similar slip.

Oliver Hess, Third Place
Category 3 & 4, Grade 4



Lyla Carrel, Grade 6

Night Train

Sitting alone in the darkness
At my kitchen table
I listen for the whistle of the night train.

Every night same time
Right on cue
The lonely, mournful sound
Of the night train

Every night same time
Right on cue
I sit at the kitchen table

I imagine passengers
Sitting one behind another
Staring into the endless night.

Traveling to places where strangers only go
Suitcases and duffles packed full
Carrying stories that need to be told.

One night I will board that train
Take a seat among fellow passengers
Just another stranger with a story to tell.

Pamela Hodgdon, 3rd place
Category Adult, Dover, NH

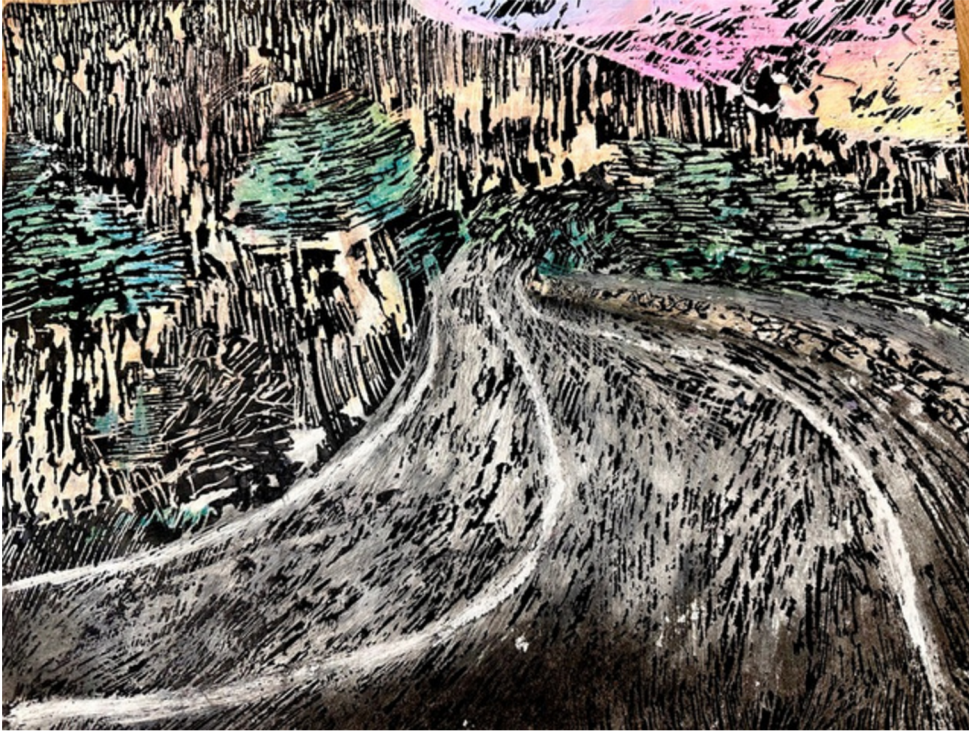
Logan Pepler, Grade 5



I Hear My School Singing

Kids running down the hallway
Teachers are yelling
Kids slapping there books on the table
Sharpening their pencils, vroom
Opening their lunch boxes, zip
Eating there food, crunch
Kids singing in music
I hear my school singing.

Eva Koryom Honorable Mention
Category 3 & 4, Grade 4



Noelle Cena, Grade 7

My Library Poem

Everyone is welcome to walk
through the door, It really doesn't
matter if your rich or poor,
There are books in boxes, books in
shelves, They're free for you to
borrow, so help yourselves.

The librarian's a friend who loves to
lend, so see if there is a book she
can recommend, Read that book, and if
your bitten, you can borrow all the
other ones the author's written.

Are you into battles or biography?
Are you keen on gerbils or geography?
Gardening or ghosts? Sharks or science fiction?
There's always something here for everyone,
whatever your addiction.

Yes, come to the library! Browse and borrow,
and help make sure the book will be here
tomorrow.

Suhrith Reddy Chinthamreddy, 1st place
Category 5 & 6, Grade 5



Tessa Demeter, Grade 6

Memorial Day Somewhere in Worcester

Grandma is standing on her deathbed.
She's never said *I'm going to die*,
but she's all macular degeneration,
all spinal stenosis, all bone and no sinew.

Memorial Day somewhere in Worcester,
Grandma is shuffling across the sod
newly knitted into blue crab grass,
while she and Dad pick weeds covering
Armand's grave marker waiting to be finished.

Memorial Day somewhere in Worcester,
Grandma is stooping over the recovering welt
in the earth as she apologizes for the years
she's kept Armand waiting and promises,
I will be with you soon—
She's never said *I'm going to die* in front of her son.

Memorial Day somewhere in Worcester,
Grandma is supporting herself with her cane
as she prods at the tiny American flag
rooted in the healed grass above Armand's head,
coaxing it to stand at attention.

Memorial Day somewhere in Worcester,
Grandma is hugging me at the threshold
of her retirement home door as she says, *I suppose
this is the last time I'm gonna see you.*

Memorial Day somewhere in Worcester,
Grandma is waving goodbye as she shuts the door
and walks through it forever.

Stacey Cusson, 2nd place
Category Adult, Dover, NH

The Dream

Sunshine daisies roses
and vilots they all have
a secret if you stay quiet
Ponder and wander and
maybe you'll find the
secret hidden inside if
you stay quiet maybe
you'll see a wonderouse
treasure or a fairytale
scene if you keep walking
maybe you'll find what
you've been looking for
all this time



Sophia Lajoie, 2nd place
Category 5 & 6, Grade 5

I am from

*I am from the old blue house,
I am from the giant scoops of ice cream,
From the loud school bell,
The busy fairs,
I'm from the piles of corn at gatherings,
From the old jokes that never get older,
I'm from the rainy days,
I am from the small kitchen,
From the strong current,
The rocky rivers,
I'm from the overgrown garden,
I am from the fruit pies,
From the friendly neighborhood,*

Nellie Hunt, 3rd place
Category 5 & 6, Grade 6

May we say your name.
May we sing your struggle
and christen our neighborhood streets
in your memory.
May we build bridges yet to be named
for how we smolder in our bodies' scars
as solid ground for today's girls
to walk upon, invited into dignity
you carried
quietly
without us
far too long.

Jane M. Grovijahn, 1st place
Category Adult, Dover, NH



Adelle Stice, Grade 6

For Debra Rojas

(one of the girls sexually assaulted by César Chávez in recent reporting, *New York Times*, March 20, 2026)

"I can't say the "r" word," said she.

You should not have to.

Buried secrets and shame held
in the depths of a grave:
it all belongs to him.

This is not ours, but his.

Maybe we can say other "r" words
far more deserving of you,
revealing this side of the dirt
in revolutions of resilience.
Rarity of resolve to *never* forget,
rectifying little of the contempt contained
among those who knew and said nothing.

Still, their secrets, their shame.

What is ours, falls from
your trembling voice,
tiptoeing
out into daylight
fifty years later
still clutching the power
of your stunning elegance
never diminished, never dimmed,
merely delayed.

Timeless

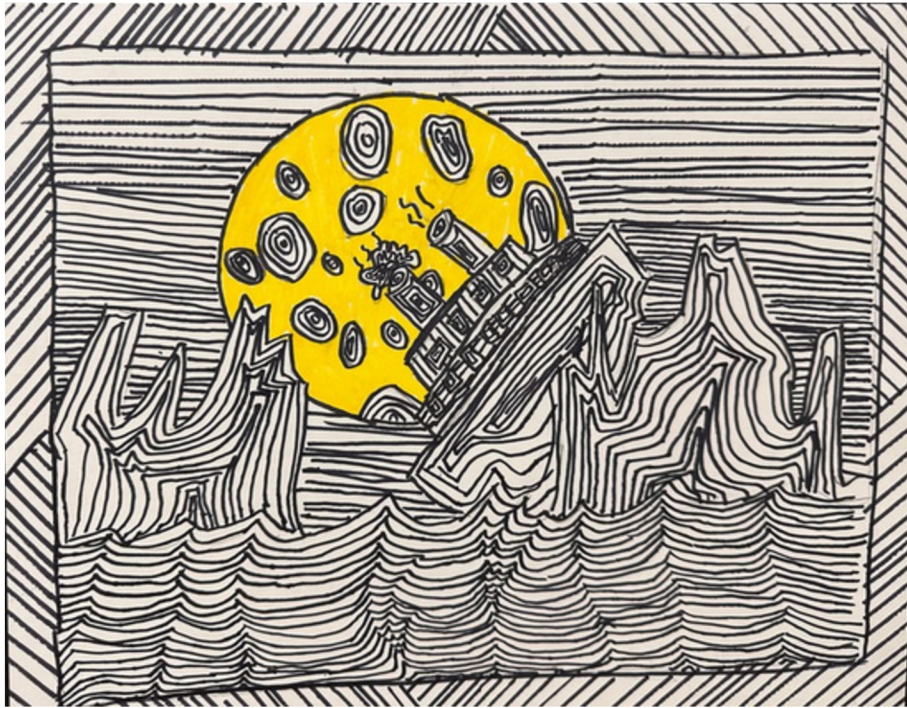
I'm stuck in a time that never started
So it can't end
Everything I do feels half-hearted
like I'm playing pretend

I notice as people grow old
They seem to change
They try to fit in society's mold
They seem distant and strange

I feel trapped, lost in an endless maze
There is always something lurking in the background
Time passing in a blurred haze
Searching for an exit never to be found

Everywhere I go, it feels wrong
Something or someone is in the wrong place
I've known who it could be all along
Though the truth is something I don't want to face

Zinnia Downs, Honorable Mention
Category 5 & 6, Grade 5



Alexander Scott, Grade 6



Garrett Brown, Grade 5



Viviana Contretras, Grade 5

Sunrise aboard the *Luffernutter*

We could sail out upon the sunrise,
Watching the water turn red from fires far above.
Just us two, you and I, never forced to say goodbye.

We rig our ship, to the admiration of adventurous eyes.
The bold white sail, large as a whale, shines like the purest dove.
We could sail out upon the sunrise.

The ship glides across lakes, surrounded by mountains high,
Stirring ripples, small waves sent out by the boat's swift shove.
Just us two, you and I, never forced to say goodbye.

Upon the deck, watching clouds drift far up in the sky,
Caught in the serenity found thereof.
We could sail out upon the sunrise.

Alone, we float through calm waters, with the wind quiet and shy,
Drifting in our own secret, sheltered cove.
Just us two, you and I, never forced to say goodbye.

The peace and joy found on the water is calling, so let's give it a try,
Aboard our proud ship, held in our shared love.
We could sail out upon the sunrise,
Just us two, you and I, never forced to say goodbye.

Max Hunt, 1st place
Category 7 & 8, Grade 8

"The Moon Still Shines"

You don't

Criticize the moon

For not shining

The same each night

You don't

Look up at it and say

You're not trying hard enough

Because the moon

Doesn't have to be

Full and bright

Every night to be loved

And neither do you.



Ellie Coffin, Grade 6

Arianna Brown, 2nd place
Category 7 & 8, Grade 8

Oh Dandelion Dear, what do you hear?
There's nothing to fear,
The days go by, but you're still here.

And on the darkest nights when you're filled with fear,
The moon will be there, Dandelion Dear,
and if it isn't, just know I'll be near,
Waiting to hold you, Dandelion Dear.

Holding you close, and holding you tight
The stars won't give up on you tonight.
And as you will bloom, they'll call you a weed,
But you're just getting by with dandelion seeds.

And every word that cuts through bone,
Could never make you feel alone.
Bloom while they sleep, the winds will steer,
They carry your dreams, Dandelion Dear.

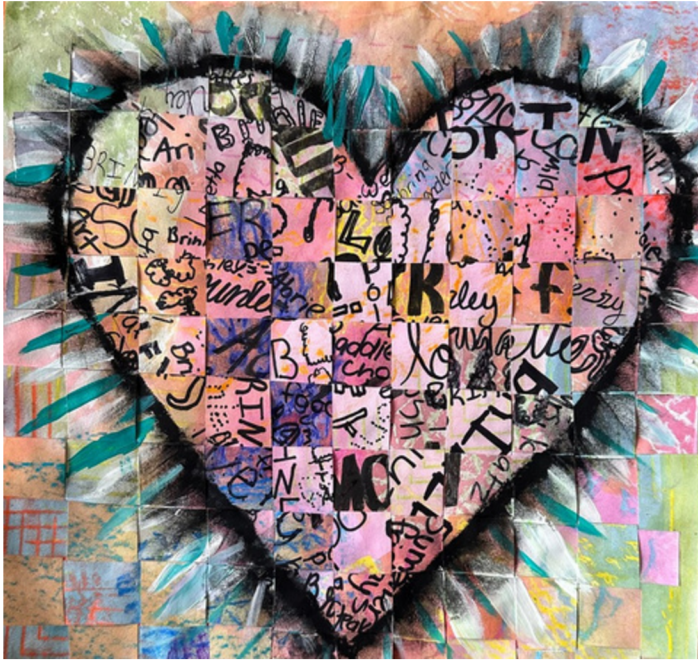
Every year I hope you come back brighter,
You taught me that to be a lover you first must be a fighter.

Amira Myassar, 2nd place
Category 11 & 12, Grade 12



Everett Chase, Grade 6

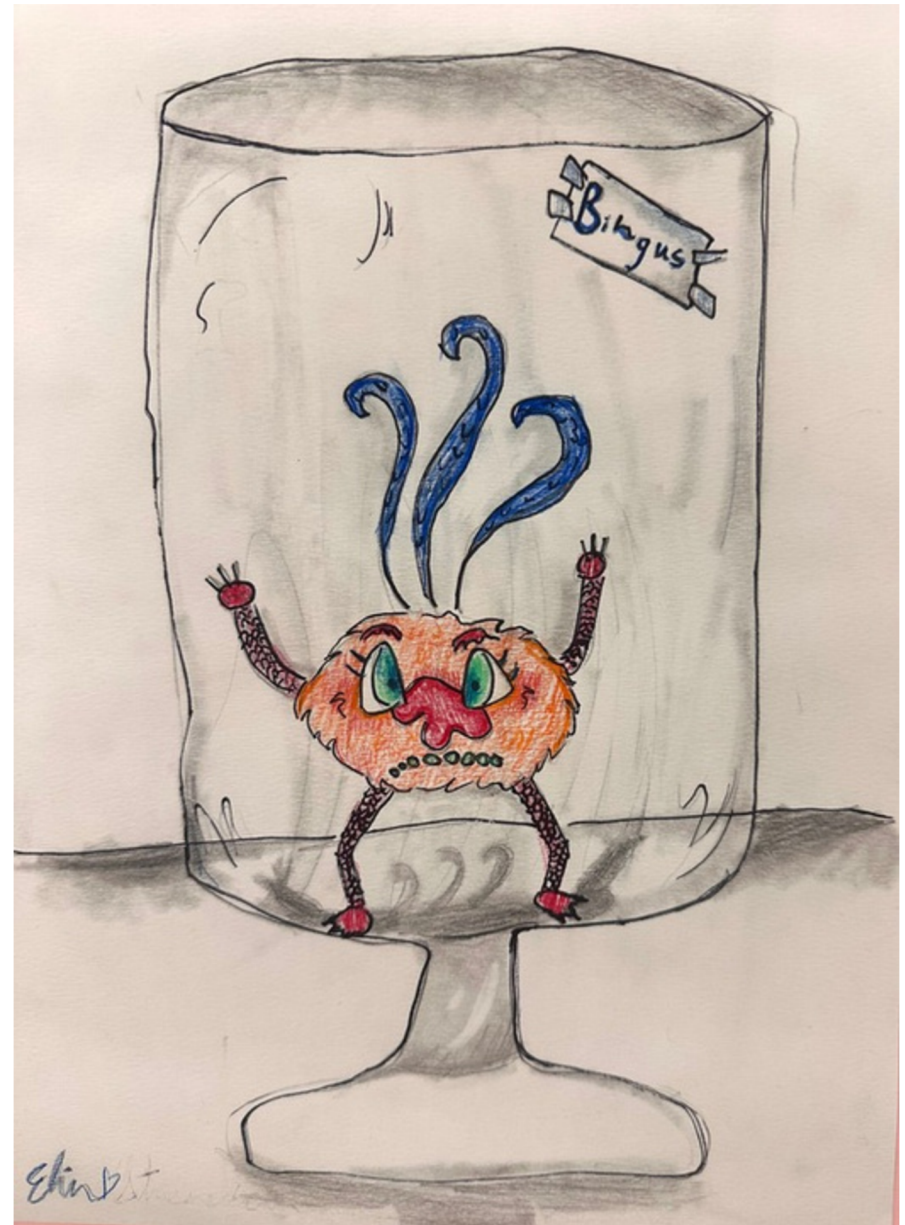
Brinley Polchies, Grade 5



Prickles And Peanuts

Prickles and peanuts will stab through my precise heart, puncturing my wounds which will pinch and pick at my scars. Prickles and peanuts will destroy my prerogative, they pull and pin my heart strings into place, which will remain a taxidermy in the East London Palace place. Prickles and peanuts rupture my veins and I will bleed out and forever be known the same, people will pat their feet over my preserved, cold, lifeless body, painted with dirt, partially pasted with glue and salt. Prickles and peanuts will be the pores of my parched, parasitic, pointless body. Prickles and peanuts will stab through my precise heart, puncturing my wounds which will pinch and pick at my scars.

Mason Webber, 3rd place
Category 7 & 8, Grade 8



Elin Stevenson, Grade 5

Wandered Halls

I walk through halls that twist and crawl,
for no purpose but confuse me.
I work through stone and will and bone,
Just to get to doing.
Why do walls block me so?
When I am their creator.
Then again, they were not built,
Just spawned by my behavior.
I try to see, to learn, to be
That which I am able.
But why is work what I pursue,
Not life nor love to savour?
They say that be your brain unwell,
Only when affects your work.
For all that matters to those who lie and lounge and savour,
Is if or not we work today,
To fuel their lives and boost their pay.

Hayden Ibarra, 1st place
Category 11 & 12, Grade 11

On BlueJay Drive.



I sit in class,
The clock ticking,
Slowly draining my life,
The sound of that clicking.

When work is passed in,
The school bell finally rings.
Kids sprint through the halls,
As if they had wings.

As the bus rolls away,
The campus is finally clear,
I roll my bike off the rack,
And quickly switch into gear.

The sound of rubber,
It's music to my ear.
The bike glides and glides,
I almost start to tear.

With the road to myself,
My imagination soars.
New streets catch my eye,
Time for some detours!

I race down the hill,
Zipping like a star,
Speed doesn't scare me,
I don't mind a little scar.

As I near the the curb,
The brakes start to squeal,
The sun hides behind the hills,
It almost feels unreal.

Cohen Minnis, Honorable Mention
Category 7 & 8, Grade 7

Maylin Huppe, Grade 8



Aurora Pomerleau, Grade 8



Ridhi Aggarwal, Grade 7

“You don’t know pain”

You don’t know pain
Until your heart beats so fast
Thumping, Thumping, Thumping
I feel my heart in my hand
The anxiety grabs onto me and won’t let go
I scream and scream
My lungs feel weak
Help, Help me
I am stuck in my own head, It feels like a nightmare
The grasp is too tight, it is suffocating me
I feel my head underwater, I hope I don’t drown
The pain grasps me
Tighter and tighter
Let me go, I scream
No one hears
My lungs give out
I stumble, too weak to stand
You don’t know pain
I say, quietly too tired to scream.

Aisha Khan, 3rd place
Category 9 & 10, Grade 10

The Sobbing Rain

The sky cries a few fat droplets
Down
down
down
they go
Plink! Plink!

Short, soft staccatos on the roof
Gutters gather drops to rivulets

Racing down the silver slides

Quiet waterfalls soaking damp dirt
Shallow lakes form on cracked pavement

Quick wheels make fresh ocean waves

Turning away, not looking back
Tear stained trees dance with movement

Cool winds wash away spring heat

But golden beams blaze through branches
As light dissolves the sobbing rain

Eleanor Gorman, 1st place
Category 9 & 10, Grade 9

Where Poppies Rest

And there he lay, a shadow
A smile, clear as day
Deep in the frail wood
Tangled and left to kneel
Emerges a poppy field
Where the birds sing
And the grass dances with the gentle wind
Quietly offering a place of rest

Behold a grave, but no name
Surrounded by the flourishing field
The poppies glow like a sunset
Laid to rest, but reborn again
Into a light for the world

Lilah Kraemer, 2nd place
Category 9 & 10, Grade 10



Avery Towle, Grade 7