



Youth Writing Competition

In collaboration with the
National Writing Project of Acadiana

Winners' Anthology

Fall 2022

Acknowledgments

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Sincerely,

H. Michelle Kreamer
Co-Director, National Writing Project of Acadiana
Coordinator, Festival of Words Student Writing Competition

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Elementary School Division (Grades 3-5)

1st place Fiction—Elementary School Division

By: **Alma Carver**

J. Wallace James

“Erica’s Hurricane”

This is the story of a woman who lost her home in a hurricane. This woman was incredibly brave and strong through the storm. She lost many of her valuables in Hurricane Sandy. This incredible woman showed perseverance through the storm.

It was a beautiful and sunny day in New Orleans. Erica was getting ready for work when she got a notification on her phone from her friend, Sarah, who told her to turn on the news. When she turned on the news, she couldn’t believe her eyes—a map of the route of a category five hurricane, Hurricane Sandy, heading right for New Orleans.

Her mind started swirling and her stomach did a few flips, she started packing as fast as possible, but it started pouring down rain. She was scared out of her mind, so she grabbed her dog, Poppy, and a pair of PJs and left. She got in her car and drove to her cousin's house in Arkansas. When her cousins, Lucas and Emery, saw her, they tried to cheer her up. They even went to the movies, but nothing seemed to make her happy. She was worried sick.

After the longest ordeal in her life, she decided to go home. She cried when she got to her house; she couldn’t stand the sight of it—her home was covered in brown and green mold. She tried to salvage as much as possible, but she couldn’t find much. Just five shirts, four pairs of pants, some pictures, and one pair of shoes. She had to start her life over from scratch.

Later that day around 6:00 at night, Erica heard a doorbell ring. She went to see who it was, and when she opened the door she squealed with delight. It was her parents!!! She hadn’t seen them since Christmas, that’s eight months! Her parents were happy to see Erica was safe. They had been worried sick, they drove seven hours just to see her.

Erica explained what had happened, she told them how scared she had been. How she had taken a trip to Arkansas, and the trip home. Her parents stayed the night, and helped her clean up the next day. They cleaned out the house, they scrubbed the walls, they repainted the entire house, and they went shopping for new furniture.

After they were done with the house, [it took them a couple days] they decided to get a treat at Yogurt Palace. They had so much fun visiting, that they lost track of time. It was time to go home. When they got back they were exhausted, so they fell right asleep.

When they woke up, her parents started packing and getting ready to leave. When her parents left Erica started setting up the furniture and getting ready for the day. She made breakfast, an omelet (The best), then she left for her friend, Sarah's house. When she got there she was relieved to know her friend was OK. She realized sometimes the worst can bring the best out in people.

1st place Poetry—Elementary School Division
By: **Shya Hebert**
Broadmoor Elementary

“Painting Words”
~After “Wherever You Are” by Nancy Tillman

Do you ever wonder how our minds
Sift through daily moments –
Images, sounds, and words –
And carefully choose the special ones
To be painted into our memories?

How does the mind choose?

Years from now, will I remember tonight
And how I balanced my baby sister on my hip
As she flailed her chubby arms
At the row of books in front of us?

Will I remember her squeal of excitement,
As her dimpled fingers landed on the one –
The book that would send her off to dreamland?

I didn’t know why she chose that one –
It didn’t look like much
It sat with no jacket to protect it,
Its edges worn,
Its cover image fading –
Though I could clearly make out
Three dolphins leaping from a blue ocean

Inside, the pages were creased and tattered,
But her tiny fingers chose that one
So, helped her to hold it with my free hand
As we walked over to you

I placed the baby in the nook of your left arm
And took my place at your right,
While carefully holding the book
So my sister and I could see

I listened as the words from the pages
Dripped from your lips

“I wanted you more,
Than you ever will know”
You said,
“So, I sent love to follow wherever you go...”

But your eyes never met those words
Instead your gaze moved
From my sister to me with each line

And then I realized those words
Were painted across your mind
Not only because
My own tiny fingers
Chose this book as “the one,” too
But also because the words were true

And I hope that you know,
Whether my mind paints this night or not,
“Wherever you are, my love will find you,” too.

“Simple Love on Christmas”

Christmas time is the highlight
Of all the adventures we have experienced together
And the beautiful memories we have shared

Breathing in the soft smell of the freshly melted wax of Christmas candles drifting through the air
Experiencing the magic smell of life from a thriving christmas tree dipped in water to preserve it

Smelling the sweetness of roasting marshmallows reminds me of a soft, warm hug from you
Sitting before the crackling fire reminds me of my burning heart full of love for you
Watching our favorite Christmas movie together shows my love for you and our time together,
Sharing a love for the Christmas season reminds me of my love for you

To me, you are the soft smelling candles,
You are the Christmas tree thriving with life,
Your hugs are the fire to my marshmallow heart

And my love for Christmas is simply my love for you.

2nd place Poetry—Elementary School Division
By: **Avalyn Xanamane**
Coteau Elementary

“Rely”

The mean and chaotic world is awake
and all you have is yourself,
and love.

Whether as fine as a tree
or as endangered as a baby bee
finding pollen in a sunflower
realizing it's all alone
but it can rely on itself to survive
so relying on others is a huge mistake.

3rd place Poetry—Elementary School Division
By: **Jeremiah Smith**
Breux Bridge Elementary

“Freedom”

Freedom is the state of being free
Roaming around with bliss and glee
No school taking place from 8 to 3
Happily buzzing around like a bee

No more working 9 to 5
No longer are we sleep deprived
Living our lives without a care
No more suit and tie to wear

A more realistic freedom is civil rights
For the citizens of the red, blue and white
But it shouldn't be only for the red, white, and blue
It should be for me, for you, and all over the world too

Freedom makes the world a better place
Dictatorship leaves a rather bad trace
So let freedom ring all over the earth
In everybody's place of birth

Middle School Division (Grades 6-8)

1st place Fiction—Middle School Division

By: **Hannah Pham**

Broussard Middle School

“When Everything Went Wrong”

— — — —

Two children: a girl and a boy, who met at the ages of 9 and 10.
So young, naive, and full of love.
So full of love for each other.

— — — —

“I can’t do this anymore.”

Apolline, startled, looked up from her task – field work – and made eye contact with her childhood friend (and possibly lover), Theo. “What?”

“Us. No more.” Theo’s courage seemed to be moved by Apolline’s silence, because his next words came out jumbled. “Lina, I’m nearly of age. They’re going to assign me a marriage partner by then, and continuing with what we have would be against the rules.”

“Against the rules? What? Since when did you...” She trailed off.

Theo stayed silent, giving Lina the answer that she needed.

“You’re a coward.”

I’m sorry, Theo meant to say.

But Lina was too far gone in her anger to notice.

How did everything go from right to *so wrong*?

— — — —

“Apolline?”

She felt her stomach twist into knots when she finally discerned who it was.

No, not him, not him, not after a year-

“Lina!”

He was faster than her, blocking her way across the sidewalk.

She stepped back. “Theodorus. It’s been a while.”

She knew he could sense the burning tension. She could feel the forced cheer of his reply, “Yeah, it has.”

She strained a smile, averting her eyes away. She wanted to look at anything else. Anyone other than him. Most of all she wanted to escape this conversation. But he was blocking her exit.

Lina suddenly realized that they weren’t alone, noticing someones’ awkward stance next to Theo. And it was a girl. She felt her mouth move into a frown.

Theo noticed her eyeing the girl beside him, and said, “This is my soon-to-be-wife. Isadora Dupois.”

Then there it was. The last straw.

The moment where she knew her world truly crumbled to pieces.
But perhaps she could change that.

— — — —

“Father, what can I do if there’s this one thing I want, but someone else has it already?”

He sighed, tearing his gaze away from the paper on the table. “Well, you’re gonna be selfless and allow the other person to keep it. We don’t want to be portrayed as self-indulgent citizens, do we, Apolline?”

Lina shook her head no, smiling tightly. Never mind that, it was foolish of her to ask for her father’s opinion.

Later that night, though, her mind wandered to her father’s advice, lingering there. After a brief moment of hesitation, she allowed herself to give it more thought.

Perhaps it wasn’t as foolish of an advice as she thought it were to be.

— — — —

From what she heard according to her coworkers, Theo’s spouse was ill, giving her an opportunity to seize this advantage.

If she had to be selfless and “give what she wanted to the other person,” then perhaps it was time for that other person to be gone.

It was time for her to have him back.

— — — —

Lina took a deep breath, clutching a bowl of soup tightly with both hands.

She was going to do this.

She had asked around earlier to figure out where Isadora had lived, where she was kindly informed by an elderly woman.

But as she was walking, Lina felt the urge to turn back. In her mind, deep down there, she knew she shouldn’t be doing this. Because she cared too much about him to do so. But that was also why Lina was doing this.

She reached the front door, took a deep breath, and rang the doorbell.

As expected, Isadora was the one to open the door. Her eyes widened with recognition when she saw Lina. Isadora leaned against the doorframe, expressing curiosity. “Hi! Apolline, right? What are you doing here?”

Her eyes were kind, her smile warm. Lina felt a spang of guilt but ignored it, shoving the bowl of soup to her before she could rethink her choices.

“I heard you were feeling ill, so I decided to make my mother’s soup for you.” She gave her utmost sympathetic smile. “Consider it as an early bridal gift.”

Isadora raises her eyebrows in surprise. “Oh, *merci!*”

“Of course! It’s no problem.”

Once she said her farewells, Lina turned around, walking away from the house.

What she didn’t mention was that she had seasoned the soup with poisonous herbs from the field.

Poisonous enough to be fatal.

— — — —

A few days later, Lina couldn't say she was surprised to hear that Isadora had died from an "undetermined cause." She knew that they were most likely going to blame it on the illness that Isadora had, and Lina gave herself a discreet, triumphant smile.

She'd done what she needed to do. Now, it was time to get what she wanted to have.

She felt something inside her unravel – the raging envy she felt in her stomach. She was pleased with the small drop of satisfaction that came to replace it. Lina felt a madness rising in her, unable to settle it, so she decided to let it run free.

— — — —

Lina had spent nearly half an hour searching for Theo. Until, finally, someone told her they saw him sitting at the dangerous edge of the mountain, so that was where she was headed.

When Lina arrived, she saw him sitting on the ground, lost in thought. It was time. She took a deep breath. She could do this. She could win him back again.

"Theo!" Lina ran up to him.

He looked up, startled, and his eyes hardened when he saw her. "Lina."

"Hey. I heard about the news with Isadora." She forced a sorrowful tone, standing across from where he was sitting.

He sighed. "These past few days have been difficult." She nodded her head in understanding.

"I'm sorry. It was difficult for me, too – especially because you were to be married to her. And her death means you no longer have a marriage contract."

He didn't say anything.

"But," she took a deep breath, "I was wondering, since your spouse has died, does that mean you can be with me now?"

Theo gave her an incredulous look. "What?"

"What? What do you mean *what*?" Lina gestured around wildly, "look around! The possibilities are endless! With Isadora gone" – she then remembered that she had to sound sad – "I could be the next person that you choose for a hand in marriage."

She released the breath that she was holding.

It was going well so far – or so she assumed.

He gaped at her for a brief moment, facial expressions working their way into disbelief. When he was set to reply, Lina expected for Theo to take her back with loving arms. She expected for him to agree, saying that she was the only one for him.

She didn't think that refusal was possible.

"Apolline." He paused with uncertainty, straightening his back and observing her closely. "Were you the one that killed Isadora?"

Lina frowned, standing up and crossing her arms and watched him carefully. "What? No! Who do you think I am?"

Theo stared at her, realization dawning to him. "You killed her."

She then shrugged, allowing herself to drop the act. "I did, didn't I?" She then let out a hollow laugh, giving the slightest quirk of the lips at the expression on his face. "But Theo! I did it for you. I did it for *us*."

“You’re insane,” Theo said slowly, dragging out the words coated in incredulity.

“But I’ve done so much to have you!” She could hear her own desperation and she hated it, because for once she thought she had the upper hand. But that’s okay. She can fix the uprising conflict. “I did *so much* for us, and now we can be together again. There’s nothing stopping us.”

He stood up. “You’re insane.” She stared at him in betrayal, each word piercing into her mind sharply. “I don’t know you, Apolline. Not anymore.” Then he turned to leave.

Rejection.

So this was how it felt.

Why couldn’t he understand that she wasn’t just thinking about herself – but of him, too? She’d done so, *so much* for him. Then he had simply walked away from her.

Normal girls would only watch him walk away. But she was Apolline Beaufoy. And she couldn’t let him go.

She launched forward, grabbing onto his arm and pulling him closer. Theo’s head snapped towards her, a familiar expression working its way to his face.

She realized it was fear. He was *afraid* of her.

Good.

Lina gave him a smile.

“I was your first love,” she whispered to him, tilting her head to the side. “But that’s okay, because I can be your last one too.”

And she shoved him over the mountain.

— — — —

Theodorus Lefevre was a coward and he knew it.

But he didn’t realize it would get this far. He didn’t realize that he would be falling down from a cliff, his end awaiting him.

The person he once knew, Apolline Beaufoy, was gone.

And it was his fault.

— — — —

2nd place Fiction—Middle School Division
By: **Grace Barras**
Youngsville Middle School

“Romney”

Skipping through the forest lit by the newly risen sun was a little enchantress. Her green dress swayed behind her and her black horns shimmered in the light. She was playfully following the river; skipping as fast as the slow current.

*Stream, little stream, little stream,
come with me today.
Stream, little stream, little stream,
this is how we play.*

She sang to the calm water. Slowing down, the enchantress pulled out a flute and began playing under the shade of an oak tree.

*Stream, little stream, little stream,
run away with me.
Stream, little stream, little stream,
this is what we say.*

The girl danced on her toes making cartwheels, doing flips, twirling, and jumping. The water sparkled and the current followed her rhythm. She trotted like a horse towards the origin of the water, sat on a rock in the middle of the river, and hummed. Birds fluttered past, butterflies landed on the nearby milkweed, and deer peacefully grazed on the shrubs. All was peaceful. The water below her danced to her song, thankful for someone to give it company. In return, the water rose from the bank and took form as a hoy. The girl, full of excitement, ran to her new friend.

"Oh, hello!" she squealed. She grabbed the water's hand and dragged him into the forest. Splashing, the water smiled and obediently followed. The enchantress led the water down into a dip in the land where a house lay in the sand'

"This is where I live." she told him. "You can spend the day with me if you'd like." Frantically, the water nodded and headed down to the house. The light green grass under their feet quickly turned to sand which swiped some of the water from the stream. The waterboy did not care, for he was too busy following the girl. As soon as they had reached the front door, the girl opened it quickly and pushed her friend inside. The wood floor blended with the light gray walls. Amazed at what he was seeing, the waterboy explored the little house, taking in every detail.

"Do you like it?" The girl asked. "It isn't much, being in the middle of the woods, but I love the creature company." She smiled compassionately and the stream smiled back. "Oh, you can smile!" Jumping up and down, the girl clapped her hands together excitedly.

"What-is-your-name?" The boy spluttered. The girl's eyes widened with amazement.

"Drezela." she said without hesitation' "What is yours?"

"Romney." Romney is an English name for a winding river. Explorers earlier in

Romney's life named him that because of how long it took them to reach the end. Drezela clapped heartedly and ran over to a cabinet.

"Are you hungry, Romney? I am afraid I only have some meat in the ice box but I have lots of vegetables." Romney splashed slowly over to her and looked in the cabinet.

"No-thank-you." he said. "I-am-not-hungry." Drezela smiled again.

"Okay. What would you like to do first? We have the whole day together!" Romney looked around, trying to come up with an idea.

"Tree climbing?" Drezela suggested. Romney slapped his hands together as if clapping, and headed towards the door'. Drezela excitedly followed and opened it.

Each tree reached the clouds above them.

"These-are-tall." Blurted Romney. Drezela looked at the sky with wonder.

"Have you ever wished to fly?" she asked.

"I-have-flied-before. But-I-mostly-fall." Drezela laughed. Romney wasn't sure why she laughed, but joined her anyway. When Drezela calmed herself, she began looking for foot holes to support her when climbing.

"You climb that tree, and I'll climb this one." Romney looked to his left to see a twenty foot tall tree. He walked over to it and began climbing up. The water that made him soaked into the bark of the trunk of the tree.

"I-can't-climb." he complained. Drezela, already three feet up, looked down.

"Why not?" she called. Romney, a foot smaller than normal, looked up at her.

"I-am-water-and-water-is-not-meant-to-climb-trees." Drezela frowned and started down the tree.

"Okay, Romney. I'm sorry that you can't climb trees. What shall we do now?" Romney thought hard. Harder than water should think.

"Water-can-not-think-like-humans." he admitted. "I-can-not-think.

I-have-no-brain-nor-a-conscious. "

"Well how can you talk like a human?" Drezela asked.

"Every-day-when-you-visit-me-I-listen-to-your-words.

I-have-learned-to-talk-because-of-you." Romney explained. "Yet-my-speech-isn't-perfect." he stuttered. The sun rose above the clouds, making Drezela hot.

"Whew, it is becoming hot out here."

"Yes-it-is." Romney and Drezela headed to an oak tree that provided a surprisingly huge amount of shade. "Shall-we-take-a-nap?" Romney asked. Drezela looked at her friend of water and nodded.

The nap lasted an hour, but with it being so hot, half of Romney evaporated into the atmosphere. Romney was oblivious to this, of course, knowing that water can't feel pain. Drezela woke a minute before Romney did.

"Oh, Romney! You're smaller than I remembered." she exclaimed with shock. Romney examined himself as if nothing had happened.

"It-appears-I-am." Standing up, Romney looked as though he was as tall as a dog standing on its hind legs. "Shall-we-continue-our-fun-day?" he asked.

"Oh no! We can't! You are fading!" Drezela protested. Romney thought back at the sand, trees, and the hot sun.

"No-matter-that. I-would-like-to-have-fun-with-you." Romney ran from the shade,

splashing and sloping water everywhere.

"Romney, wait for me please!" Laughed Drezela. As the day passed on, more of Romney disappeared. A picnic only made the sun hotter. Hours passed and Romney was as short as a shrub.

"Romney, are you okay?" Drezela asked. Her friend frowned.

"No-Drezela-I-am-not." he admitted. "I-am-fading-away-faster-than-I-thought." The sun beamed upon them, steam coming from Romney's head'

"Let us go to the stream. Swimming might fix this terrible problem." Both of them ran towards the stream. Drezela's dress swayed in the light wind while Romney lost more and more water. By the time they had reached the stream, Romney was as small as a smurf.

"We made it, Romney! Just jump in and you'll be fine!" Drezela turned around to see nothing but the forest behind her. Trees covered every square mile, flowers covered the grass with their colorful petals, and the natural creatures scurried along. No sign of Romney was visible except for the last sight of steam that made Drezela's heart stop.

"Oh, Romney! Please don't go! Our day isn't over," Drezela sat onto the bank and cried between her knees. The salty tears of hers dropped on the grass like rain drops. Rain drops. Rain drops.

Rain. Drezela thought between sobs. She thought back on her day with Romney. *'I-have-flied-before. But-I-mostly-fall'* Drezela cried harder at the mere thought of her friend.

"I am a terrible friend. I should have told him to go to the stream sooner." Drezela, crying even harder, squeezed her head between her knees. The wind sped up making her silky brown hair sway. The wind blew through the leaves of trees making a sound. A familiar sound. The wind was playing her song. Dancing along to it, Drezela realized what needed to be done.

"Rain!" she exclaimed. "Rain is water! Romney is water!" Drezela stopped crying, pulled out her flute, and began playing with the wind.

*Stream, little stream, little stream,
rain upon me.
Stream, little stream, little stream,
I haven't long to stay.*

Dark clouds began forming in the sky. Thunder sounded off in the distance, followed by the crack of thunder. Drezela smiled and continued playing.

*Stream, little stream, little stream,
come back to me,
Stream, little stream, little stream,
this is what I pray,*

More lighting and thunder drowned out her playing, but she kept on. A wet drop splattered on her nose and she smiled. When she stopped playing, bigger drops of rain fell to the ground. Soon enough there was a great downpour. Drezela put her flute away and sat on a rock in the middle of the river. She let the rain fall on her, it felt like a hug. She hummed to herself and waited while the storm went on. She didn't put on a cloak, didn't go inside to shelter herself from the rain. Drezela just sat there, humming her tune. Each drop spoke to her. Every thought of Romney made Drezela smile.

"Romney, if you can hear me, I miss you very much. I hope that you can return to land

and see me again." she prayed. Looking up into the sky, Drezela saw something that made her eyes sparkle. The rain began to change colors as they hit the water. Drezela watched in wonder as they did so. Minutes later, the storm cleared and the stream was still rippling calmly. Drezela kept playing and, as it had done before, the stream gleamed with gratitude and took form as Romney.

"What-is-your-name?" he asked. Drezela realized that Romney had forgotten about her and their day together. She smiled and stated her name. Both sat along the bank and Drezela played her song, yet the words were different from before. These lyrics held all of her adventures with Romney that came from her heart.

3rd place Fiction—Middle School Division
By: **Amelia Hoyt**
L.J. Alleman

“Huddled to a Lie”

To hold a lie so bold and conceited, glistening ever so close to your chest, is a feat draped with sunken sorrows as well as untold exuberance. When told to return the lie to the sincere and be faced with a choice of morality, abide to the principle or bear sustainability, you may in often times choose the latter. The lady in questioning did, of course. She was of old age, you see, and she could not hesitate to pick for she had withheld her lie for quite the while.

Uninformed of the truth is an ignorance humanity is -- as some would say -- cursed -- or as others -- blessed with, an ignorance that shimmers in the face of tranquility as it shrieks alongside immorality. The old woman cursed her own but blessed the ignorance of others, knowing that without it she may have never held the world in the palm of her hand and worn the lie, a diadem on her brow.



“You are of a wealthy family, are you not?” the bobby questioned. The old woman, sitting in the parlor of her abode, stared impassively at the bobby for she knew where this discussion was to be led.

“I am,” said the old woman, her voice silky and lull, full of beauty and percipience yet postured with insinuation.

The bobby reclined in his seat, sighing and crossing his legs, scrutinizing the old woman with the eyes of an unimpeachable manner that held a depth of treacherously. Astray in her leer for a moment, he soon turned his regard back to the discussion at hand. “And yet you stride about with such mendacity under your skin?”

“I do not know what you speak of.”

“Utter nonsense!” The bobby strikes the arm of the chair with his fist. The old woman observes him as the two of them linger in a moment of tranquility. The bobby stifled a raspy cough and polished his waistcoat. “As I disclosed, it is truly conspicuous and palpable that it was indeed you who executed the misdeed.”

The old woman’s bearing never vacillated, perhaps being censured does not hold any remorse in her bosom.

“Like I mentioned previously, I do not know what you speak of.” Her eyes narrowed, her voice laced with injunction. They sat in a stiffening silence while a few moments passed, the bobby returning her vulgar gaze.

The bobby emitted an inelegant sigh, “I had hoped it would not have come to this.” The bobby rose from his chair, strolled across the parlor, and clasped the old woman’s forearm. In an expeditious gesture, he had cuffs encompassing her wrists. “Elizabeth Harris, you are to follow me. I have suspicion that you have executed a felony.”

The bobby expected an objection, a manifestation of remorse, yet his action was left repaid with nothing but inhospitable, ghastly eyes. Unable to inform whether she was filled with

guilt or wrath, the bobby was in an attempt to pry her up and take her away. Yet the old lady never budged.

“Miss Elizabeth, you must move. I cannot guarantee you the arms of safety if you do not come with me willingly.” The old woman just sat there, glaring towards the bobby. “Miss Elizabeth, I do not wish to do this!” Silence nevertheless. The bobby reluctantly reached for his baton. He laced his fingers around the handle with one hand, the other still clutching the old woman’s forearm. He drew it from his holster and raised it to the air. His eyes flicked pain as he turned away, not willing to witness the horrors he was to commit. He began driving the baton towards her when the old woman started talking.

“I shall not be taken away unless you tell me what wrong I’ve committed.” The baton froze at the stern and soberness of her voice.

The bobby secured gazes with the old woman. He had thought of her as adept and advisable, yet she made such a senseless remark. An involuntarily smirk crept across his face, he chuckled even. He leaned forward and whispered words in the old woman’s ears. Words that will verify the melancholy truth that not everybody is blinded by ignorance. “Well because you stole the crown, of course.”

Honorable Mention—Middle School Division
By: **Destiny Roberson**
Magnet Academy for Cultural Arts

“A Day in His Life”

I wake up, get dressed and head downstairs. I wave goodbye to my mom and dad, as I take an orange and head out the door. Once again, just like every day, I hit my head on the door. I’m still trying to get used to all of this. It happened about a week ago. A week ago I was approached by a couple, a new word I learned by the way, who wanted to adopt me. Can you believe they wanted to adopt me? Everyone’s parents tell them to never go with strangers, but since I don’t have parents I decided to go with them.

On the way home they asked my name. I told them it was Franky because do you seriously expect me to go around telling people my name is Frankenstein? They showed me to my room and I had to admit it was pretty nice. It had LED lights and all kinds of things normal teenage kids have in their rooms. The only probably was that the door was a bit small, but they said they were going to get it fixed. I wonder what they would have done if I never went with them because they seemed to have everything already ready for me. They even enrolled me in school. The same school that I’m going to be late to if I miss the bus again. Right now I’m sitting on the sidewalk outside, just waiting for my bus to come. I hope it’s running, but at the same time I don’t really care. The only thing on my mind is the game tonight. For some reason the coach decided for me to be on the team.

He said, “You’re name’s Franky right?”

“Yes sir” I said.

“Well Franky you look like the perfect fit for my team. Meet me after school.”

Ever since then I’ve been on the basketball team. I wanted to join the science club, though. For whatever reason I’m obsessed with science. I couldn’t join the club because Coach Thomas said being in the science club wouldn’t be a good look for me or whatever that means. I’m not complaining because being on the team has made me somewhat popular.

I get on the bus and have a seat. After a while I’m woken up by someone pushing me and saying “Franky we’re at school now.”

“Thanks for waking me up”

I walk into the building and my friend comes up to me and tells me about the girls he was texting last night. He tells me that I should get a girlfriend, I’m thinking about it. We go to our lockers, then head straight to our first period class. Isn’t this the best way to start off your day? Having science first period. Especially when you have math right after.

I’m doing push ups. I have to admit they aren’t my favorite thing to do. Coach said they help prepare for the game. The game is in 23 minutes.

beep

I look down only to see that the sound has come from my phone. It was a notification from the school saying that we had a game tonight and the science club had a science fair tonight. The game starts at 4 and the fair starts at 5, it’s 3:48. I wanted to go to the fair but there probably won’t be time left when the game is over. I wanted to call in sick, but everyone already saw me

at school today and I didn't want to let my team down. And plus my parents know I'm not sick, so they were going to make me go to the game.

"Time to go on the field"

I listen to the coach and get on the field.

It's half time and so far we're winning. It's 35 to 12. With that being said they shouldn't mind if I go take a quick visit to the fair. I decided to be smart and put a timer on my phone. I ran to the building where the fair was being held. The building was across from the field, so there was no way I could be late. I'm probably going to get fussed at by the coach, but I don't care.

I make it to the fair and stalk them through the window. Apparently, someone saw me through the window and told them to come in.

He said "You don't have to stay outside, come in and watch."

I nodded and went in as he showed me around. Everyone's projects looked amazing. I kind of wished I could have made a project, too. I'm going around complimenting everyone and their posters. I went around so much and was having so much fun, I didn't realize half time was over. Way over. I ran back to the field, only to be too late. The game was partially over, by the time I got back. I told you I was going to get fussed at. I got back to see my team furious with me, my coach screaming at me, and my parents walking full power towards me. It turns out that we lost the game 42 to 58. If you really think about it, that wasn't such a bad loss. No one would hear me out, though. Everyone's only concern was where I was, and why I just caused the loss of the most important game of the season. Let's just say I'm off the basketball team, but I'm now in the science club. I thought my parents being proud of me meant I wouldn't get grounded, but I was wrong. I also lost most of my friends, but gained some from the science fair. I don't think I've ever been happier. Well good night. See you Monday, since I'm not allowed out this weekend.

1st place Poetry—Middle School Division
By: **Austin Funk**
Richard Elementary

“Starry Night: An Ekphrastic Poem”

A tower tells the truth of old
A gazing sight to behold
The sky seemed to swirl and swim
A glorious picture, the mind goes on a whim
Great gold suns that cover the sky

They shimmer and shine, nobody knows why
The town in the valley riddled with hills
Passing by you won't see it, but the stars will
A light lit by candles that float up above
The moon as they call it, But not quite bright as the sun

The night seems as quiet as the winds howels will be
A couple of blazes glow in the windows you'll see
But gazing upon the spotted roof
Beyond imagination our minds go “POOF”
Not a soul understands what's beyond the light

The mice will go for a rest tonight
So when all the candles falter their light
The worlds ready and awake for there to be another Starry Night

2nd place Poetry—Middle School Division
By: **Sadi Jo Guillory**
Richard Elementary

“Empty Feelings”

If I were to write a song
There would be no lyrics.
If I’d make a story,
There would be no words,
Just a blank sheet of emptiness
Like a fresh new canvas.

Trailing through a bright path
Yet I stand in darkness
Searching upon the days to see the light.
A room filled with life,
But all I see is shadows.
Like a lightbulb with no switch,
A turtle with no shell.

It’s the killing feeling of being stuck in a hole
Or having your head twined in a staircase railing.
Except when you walk,
In it all changes.

The air is no longer foggy
And the light so dim
And far now is shining close and bright.
From your angelic voice
And bright eyes
Down to your flowy dark hair.
Dark crimson lips and flushed cheeks.

Wherever you go
The spirit of joy may follow.
Most importantly,
Wherever you go,
My home is right with you.

3rd place Poetry—Middle School Division
By: **Margan Lazard**
Magnet Academy for Cultural Arts

“The Cycle”

Kaboom
Kapow
Do you hear that sound
The sound of anger
The sound of rage
A feeling she’s had locked up
Since a very young age
These multiple feelings all felt the same
They caused her to spiral and feel trapped in a cage
But no one truly understood the girl
Because all she did was fake it
Acting like she could take it
Knowing that deep down inside
All she could do was cry
And she knows that she can’t keep putting her feelings aside
But she has people to take care of,
People who needs her by their side
So she will continue to hide
And no one will ever know that she lied
Every time someone asked if she was just fine
It’s like a never ending cycle
It goes on and on
And it won’t ever stop until she stops being a pawn

High School Division (Grades 9-12)

1st place Advertisements—High School Division

By: **Jaley Joseph**

Acadiana High School

“Mean Girls: Jaley Joseph 4 Senior Class President”

SCAN TO WATCH!



2nd place Advertisements—High School Division
By: **Dorian Brown**
Magnet Academy for Cultural Arts

“The Frosty Hoodie”

Everyone loves hoodies. They’re comfortable. They look absolutely amazing. They can be the center piece for any outfit. Personally, one of my favorite parts of the winter time is being able to finally pull out all of my hoodies from the back of my closet and begin to wear them again.

But as the months go by and the weather starts to get warmer and warmer, or in the case of us here in Louisiana, once that two week cold front has run its course it's time to save the hoodies once again until next year.

Don’t you wish you could wear hoodies year round without having to worry about producing buckets of sweat?

Well, today is your lucky day as my team and I have just invented a revolutionary product that will change your life and change fashion forever.

The frosty hoodie.

Our fleece material is like no other, compact with revolutionary cooling technology, instead of making your body heat up, our product will actually lower, yes that's right, lower your body temperature keeping you nice and cool while also providing the same level of comfort as a normal hoodie.

Our product is a must have for anyone looking to partake in this fashion revolution and will not allow the seasons to determine their wardrobe

These hoodies also come in thousands of different unique designs as well as a multitude of color choices. We also offer an option to create your own personalized hoodie as well in order to ensure that you stand out from the crowd.

Come and browse our affordable selections and if you are one of the first 1000 to order our product we will send you another hoodie for completely free!

Act now as these will certainly be in high demand very soon

Stay Cool!

The Frosty hoodie is a must have for anyone who enjoys the aesthetic of hooded sweatshirts, however hates having to come to terms with the seasons that don't allow these hoodies to be worn. The frosty hoodie allows its users to enjoy the look of a hoodie year round while also providing them with cooling and comfort. With a wide variety of styles and even an option to design your own hoodies, our products will set you apart from the crowd all while keeping you comfortable, cool, and stylish.

3rd place Advertisements—High School Division
By: **Ruby Thibodeaux**
Acadiana High School

“Groovy”



1st place Multimedia—High School Division
By: **Amber LeBlanc (lyrics) and Harmony Richardson (music)**
Magnet Academy for Cultural Arts

“Drowning”

Crystal blue like your eyes
I’m trying to see what hides behind
The water’s warm
It starts to rise
And quickly here I’m aligned

The currents strong
With me swept along
I’m reaching up with no way home

I can’t breathe
I can’t fight
I’m caught up in all your might
I’m begging for a line
Just to find a way out
My heart starts to beat
But my body at ease

I’m drowning
Drowning in your web of lies
The secrets in the love we shared
I’m drowning
Drowning in your soul of ice
I’m left to pay the ultimate price

Searching for a solid ground
I’m spinning
On your never ending merry-go-round

Love is game
It’s all just a joke
I’m left in shame
Can’t remember the last time we spoke

And I can’t breathe
I can’t fight
I’m putting up all my might

I’m drowning
Drowning in your web of lies

Damn you had me hyp
I'm drowning
Drowning

Have you ever loved someone
So much that it hurt
They saw you laugh
And heard you cry
But turned their back and said goodbye

The longing nights
Thoughts in my head
When you were there
When you used to care

You were by my side in the darkness
Now I'm losing sleep
And you sleeping regardless

And I drowning
Drowning from your love
My heart is torn in two
I'm drowning
Drowning
Drowning

SCAN TO LISTEN!



2nd place Multimedia—High School Division
By: **Bethany Johnston**
Magnet Academy for Cultural Arts

“Haunted Room”

The exterior of the school has a Victorian style to it. It is a dark and dull building with bars covering the majority of the windows. The cobblestone path that leads to the entrance is chipped and the yard is slightly overgrown. On the door of the room is a sign that reads “Class taking place. Please remain quiet, or else.”

As the door opens and the tourists enter, books fall from a shelf to the left, causing all of the children seated in their desks to flinch. The children stare at them nervously, some biting their nails, some chewing their lips, and some even chattering their teeth. A boy sitting near the door is shaking his head at them, seemingly on the verge of tears.

Boy near the door, *whispering*: “Turn around. You can still go. Turn around.”

As he is speaking, Mrs. Graves walks in the door behind the people. Silas comes in through the door on the other side of the room with his arms crossed and leans against the doorway. As she comes in, he looks down at his desk and begins to shake.

Mrs. Graves: “And you were saying, Timothy?”

The boy, now known as Timothy, shakes his head frantically. Mrs. Graves walks around the tourist and in front of Timothy’s desk. Her heels make a loud noise on the tile floor as she walks. She looks around at the class and Timothy.

Mrs. Graves: “Now Timothy, what did we say about talking out of turn?”

Timothy continues to shake his head, looking down.

Mrs. Graves: “Timothy, look at me when I am speaking.”

He looks up at her. She turns to look at him and then at Silas.

Mrs. Graves: “Silas, why don’t you show Timothy what happens when we talk out of turn?”

Silas grunts and smiles to reveal his smile, or what’s left of it, being that he is missing the majority of his teeth.

Mrs. Graves: “Now Timothy, you knew the rules, yet you still decided to disobey them.”

The rest of the class watches in fear. Mrs. Graves looks over at Silas and nods. Silas begins to approach Timothy’s desk. Timothy holds on to the sides of it, shaking his head. Silas

grabs him as he kicks and screams. He takes him out of the classroom. Mrs. Graves walks to the front of the classroom.

Mrs. Graves: "Now..” She looks over at the tourists and at the children. "...we see what happens when we don't follow the rules, don't we?"

1st place Fiction—High School Division
By: **Aaron Jack**
Magnet Academy for Cultural Arts

“An Uninteresting Story”

What do I write about? There’s nothing to write about. Nothing about my life is interesting or captivating enough to be put into a short story. If you ever in life willingly choose to read a short story about me, you’ll probably start to question your own sanity because of how boring it is and proceed to burn it with the flame of a vanilla scented candle from Bath and Body Works. That’s what I would do... but you’re not me. You’re you, and you’re here for a juicy story, but I’m all out of juice, so what to do? I guess I could talk about that one time I almost died because of a dream that I had.

I was out of town with my mom for a weekend. We were visiting her hometown in Mississippi. I forget what time of year it was, but for the story’s sake, let’s pretend it was almost winter. It’s the end of November, Adele’s new album just came out, and I’m excited to get away from home, and everytime we go, we get smoothies from Smoothie King and sandwiches from Subway. We stay at my Nana’s house, and she asks me who I am everytime I see her. She’s usually sleeping in a chair in the living room. I always sleep in the backroom. It’s at the end of the hallway on the last door to the left. Nana sleeps in the actual last door of the hallway. It’s straight in the middle. My mom sleeps in the room next to me, the first door on the left, which is right across from the bathroom to the right. That’s the only door on the right. But you’re not worried about doors. I bet you’re still curious about that dream... at least I hope you are. It was either the first or last night I stayed there, so Saturday or Sunday morning, I woke up afraid and in pain, and as I’m writing this, I’m slowly starting to realize that I don’t think I remember that dream at all. Maybe I’m confusing different nights with different dreams, but this is an actual dream that I had. I’m just not sure I had that particular dream on this particular night (which I still don’t know the date of).

I was at school, and this guy I may or may not have had an obsessive crush on was by the bathroom at the same time I was. He wasn’t as lovely in this dream, though. Out of nowhere it felt like he just started bullying me. He pushed me onto the wall by the bathroom door and just started yelling at me and calling me slurs. Then, completely unprovoked, he started physically assaulting me. He punched me in the face until I bled, and then proceeded to drag me around and continue yelling at me. I was so scared that in my sleep, I clenched my jaw so hard that I saw sparks come out, even with my eyes closed. I swear I thought I had broken my jaw, but I woke up and was just scared and my mouth was hurting.

So, I kind of lied by telling you I almost died. But it felt like I would die. My jaw was so tight, and I could literally feel it clenching down and I was so scared that I couldn’t stop it. I told my mom about it and she said I should maybe wear a mouthguard when I sleep, but besides that, there’s nothing interesting about me to put into a short story.

2nd place Fiction—High School Division
By: **Sha'Layjia Dugas**
Magnet Academy for Cultural Arts

“Momma Never Knew”

Momma never knew what was good. She ain't never knew what was good for her or what was good for me. She ain't know what to do with herself, her life, or mine. Couldn't figure out a piece of her life through the fog she made with her cigarettes. She knew what was bad though. Oh, you bet she knew how to avoid the street husslas at night and the coppers in the day. She'd always thought she could outrun, outsmart, outfight the Devil. Momma was like all the rest of us. Human. Flesh and bone. And now, Momma for sure ain't know a good thing for herself. But Momma always made me think we was rich. She always had this air about her around me, like she had knowledge and power that the world would never know. Maybe she wanted me to see that from her. See a mother who ain't needed to do none of that shady stuff to get by. We ain't even had a big, nice house like them white families on the tv did. It was a lil two bedroom with the kitchen and the washroom in one, and a small living room with just a small old corner couch and a small old tv. We had a little bathroom that just fit two people. Through my eight year old eyes, this was heaven, not because of the actual house, but because I used to think my mom was wealthy, that she was just being humble and being thankful to God for what she had. I guess I thought so because if I asked for something, something that was beneficial, like a book, my momma would come home some time later, whether it be a day or a week or even a month, holdin it in her hands, smiling at me all happy.

My mom always showed all her teeth when she smiled, and then when I smiled back, she'd smile bigger and I could see some of her gums. I always thought that was good about my mom. Even when the cops had walked me to that little spot where you could talk to somebody through a phone but you couldn't touch em, my mom smiled at me real big. She told me she'd be back with me soon and she loved me. I was still eight at the time and I ain't understand what was happening. I ain't understand that what was happening would change my life forever, and I ain't knew if it was for better or worse. I knew she was sad though. Even though her smile lit up the world more than the Sun, the tears in her eyes were like pools of the sad Moon. She ain't never cried in front of me like that. In that moment, I realized momma wasn't a statue that could stand the rain, the wind, and anything else that would dare go against her. I used to compare my momma to my friend's mommas and I'd be proud of her. Real proud. She wasn't like Tommy's mom who worked all day and had to leave the parenting to his auntie, or like Deliana's mom who was too strict and never gave her a chance to be herself, wasn't like Javonte's mom who ran wild in the clubs at night and left him to his dad. No, my mother was smart and tough, hard-working and rich, and she ain't never lay a ill hand on me out of spite, ain't never let me run free to my death, ain't never told me to be 'fraid of the people on the other side of the city. Come to think of it, I ain't never knew what my mom's job was, or if she even had one. I think I assumed so, cuz' a woman as strong, and smart, and beautiful as my mom couldn't not have a good job, and ain't no woman with a job in the 70s wasn't hard-working, especially without a man. And she sure had to be strong to keep her head up through everything. And it was all for me.

I realize now that my mom was special only to me, and I was the only one who knew her for the ignorant goddess she was. Everybody else called her the weirdest names, like Mr. Benny who'd comment on her attitude change when she'd bring me around to eat at his diner, where she

used to work. He always said mom had some nerve to go in there with a negro child and a attitude like she was worth 'sum. I ain't never understood what attitude that old coot saw. My mom walked in that diner with her coupon book every Saturday afternoon, and she was polite to the only two overworked waitresses. Always told em they looked good, even though they had naps in they hair and bags under they eyes, always told Ms. Jeanine that her little Tommy was making good grades and was growing into a fine young boy, always told Ms. Auchter that her little flower garden was being cared for, and that she'd bring some food to her husband to eat on his lunch break, and dang Momma always passed a five dollar bill to each of em, even if it meant the only one who could actually eat some food at the place was me. And through all my eight years of living, I ain't never seen it before. I ain't never seen the glimpses of pain that would flash on her face if someone said something about what she kept private near me. I ain't never saw how hard my mom work to feed me and to parent me. I was still thankful though. I don't ever remember a time where I thought ill of my momma. I wasn't even angry when I learned of her "business".

I think Mr. Benny was tryna make me hate my momma when he told me what happened behind the scenes. He whispered to me all the stuff that happened when mom had to leave me with our next door neighbor to come home with full of money. And he whispered that my mom had been lying to me. But you see my momma ain't never lie to me. She just didn't tell me what I ain't ought to know. And she sure read the scripture and repeated to me that ain't no lie worth being uttered. So I ain't care. But I did have to ask my mom. Cuz if this was true and she had to make her money, *our* money, that way, then that meant my whole understanding of our situation was off. That would mean we weren't really rich and well off and Momma didn't have the power and knowledge that I thought she had. I was only ten by then. My momma nearly caught a heart attack when I asked her if it was true. Her whole demeanor fell, all that strength I once saw evaporated and came back in an instance. She had shakily asked me how I knew and when I told her it was from Mr. Benny she cursed him under her breath and then looked at me and told me not to do that. I ain't gonna over that whole conversation, but it ended with me and my mom being unfamiliar with ourselves, and we had a whole new sort of relationship. Momma said I was "advanced" and that I ought to be responsible enough for this new part of our lives. She told me everything I ain't knew before.

This was where Momma gave me permission to walk inside her head and heart and see what treasures and secrets were stored there, and she had the same permissions, of course. This was the time of exploration in our lives, where we had to survey the land and find our footing so we could move forward. And move forward we did.

Momma told me she wouldn't do any of the stuff she used to do for money. She said she'd find a job that paid enough, a real job, and a nice house, and maybe even a nice man. I didn't really see why we'd need a man in our lives, but saying it made Momma smile so I didn't say anything. Maybe she would find a man, and then he'd teach me how to play sports I already knew, or take my job of kissin Mom on the cheek every morning and saying "I love you". I had believed that in the small world I knew, there wasn't a breathing man who could see Momma for who she really was, except for me. You could call this a little foreshadowing on little me's part, because about two months later, Momma came home with a big, gum-showing smile, and a bigger surprise. We were moving. We were going from Detroit, Michigan to Lafayette, Louisiana.

3rd place Fiction—High School Division
By: **Ella Ostheimer**
Home School

“The Human Candle”

It was always the warmth of the circus that drew him in. Even from behind the curtain, in the dark cavern of backstage, the heat of the spotlight sent a spark throughout Kit’s body.

He couldn’t help it any longer. Kit peeled back a corner of the curtain to take a peek at the audience. Hidden behind the glint of the spotlight, the audience cheered at the attractions that paraded around them. The ringmaster barely had to wave his hand to silence it all. A wide grin trickled from behind his mustache.

“Behold!” George boomed, snapping his cane to the curtain. “A man unlike anything you’ve ever seen before! One that does not breathe air, but fire!”

Kit rolled his eyes and stifled a laugh. George ruled with his cane inside and outside of the big top, never daring to drop the character even for a moment. Kit could see how the glamour of his act was enough to draw anyone into the place, and how the bold commands he barked were strong enough to drive away any ideas of leaving.

It still held that power after all those years, even after time chipped and peeled away the initial magic of it all. *George’s* magic. Promises of not only protection but a loving community, and all Kit had to do was perform, using his scars given to him by his previous family to help to provide for his new one.

“They’ll think the burns are just part of the costume,” George had told him, back when he was just a terrified run away. “No one will be able to tell the difference.”

Now all that was keeping him here was a broken record of empty promises, stuck on the same loop night after night. All he had to do was just hold up his end of the bargain- nightly performances that never seemed to be big enough.

“If it were any other man,” the ringmaster continued to call to the audience, “The flames would consume them instantly, melting their body until there was nothing left! But from the fire, he was able to gain control, reshaping himself into something new! The Human Candle!”

With that, Kit rushed onto the stage, lighting the torch and lifting it to his mouth. As soon as he blew, the flame roared towards the audience, who gasped as the long fingers curled and reached where Kit could not. The flames recoiled, and the audience erupted into cheers, begging for more. And Kit provided.

But all it took was a split second. The crash from backstage was enough to interrupt his performance, followed by the overhead lights.

Suddenly, he could see reality of the audience, and they could see him. What was hidden by the ambiance of the stage lights was now on display as much as his performance had been. He could see the horrific reality of his burns reflected in the faces in the audience. Their faces twisted and morphed as the realization hit, first cringing and then frowning, glass eyes wide with fear. They all wore the same face. All of them.

Slowly, the confused grumbles of the audience that surrounded him grew into a cacophony of fear and disgust as the audience began to rise out of their seats.

Kit nearly dropped his torch as he started to back away from the audience. From behind, a hand grabbed Kit's shoulders, forcing him to stay in place as the audience began to rise out of their seats.

"Stand your ground!" the ringmaster commanded, grip tightening. Kit turned to face him, but what stared back at him was still just the mask of George's character. And, he realized, that's all he ever would be. There was no fixing a broken record.

Kit reared back, throwing the ringmaster to the ground with a thud. He didn't hesitate. Past experiences taught him better than that. Fleeing to the void of the backstage and beyond, he was thrust back into his youth, back when the burns were still fresh.

Honorable Mention Fiction—High School Division
By: **Bethany Johnston**
Magnet Academy for Cultural Arts

“Inspired by ‘Clue’”

On the evening of October 17, 1971, I sat down with my old friend Robert “Rob” Boddy at his mansion just outside of Bakewell, England. Together, we reminisced on our younger days and talked of the town’s recent hearsay. This was a semi-annual occurrence – every 6 months or so, Rob and I would meet over tea and reacquaint ourselves. If only I would have known that the next time I would see him, he would be lying in a casket.

My good friend Mr. Robert Boddy was murdered on October 18, leaving behind his adopted daughter, Dr. Mia Orchid, millions in assets, and a mystery well worth being solved. I was called to visit the mansion on October 19, and for a far different reason than the last. I, along with 6 of Mr. Boddy’s associates, were suspected of being involved in his murder. I’ve already shared my relation to Mr. Boddy. The others are as follows:

- Dr. Orchid: As previously mentioned, Dr. Mia Orchid is the adopted daughter of Mr. Boddy. Being that she has a Phd in psychology and a great admiration for her adopted father, I found it rather confusing that she would even be considered a suspect. Dr. Orchid is much smarter than to do something like this. Although many suggested that the young doctor probably murdered her father in hopes of inheriting his estate, Dr. Orchid is well enough on her own without her fathers wealth.
- Mrs. Peacock: Mrs. Henrietta Peacock is the head of the Peacock Salvation Society (funny, isn’t it?). She was one of the last to see Mr. Boddy alive. On the morning of his murder, Mrs. Peacock had paid a visit to Rob to discuss the possibility of opening a peacock sanctuary on his property. While I do think that Mrs. Peacock has a few loose screws, and may be just a little crazy, I do not believe that she would be crazy enough to murder a man, especially not a man willing to look into her ridiculous bird operation.
- Mr. Green: Mr. John Green was a detective from London who had stopped by Mr. Boddy’s mansion on the morning of his death. Though it was so short that it might not even be considered a “visit,” the sleuth figured that it was long enough to consider him a suspect. After just a short conversation with Mr. Green, I found out that he only stopped by Mr. Boddy’s mansion for a few moments to ask about the plants in front of his mansion. Mr. Green hardly even knew Mr. Boddy. Mrs. Peacock, who, as I said before, was also there at the time, confirmed that this did in fact happen.
- Professor Plum: Professor Edgar Plum is the head of the Department of Architecture at the University of Oxford and has been for quite some time. He is also the recent fiance of Miss Sophia Scarlett, whom he had only just met in June of ‘71. The Professor and Miss Scarlett spent a lot of time at Mr. Boddy’s mansion during his last few months. Professor Plum had been working on a few projects around the property, adding underground passages requested by Mr. Boddy in the study, the lounge, the kitchen, and the conservatory.

- Miss Scarlett: As I said before, Miss Scarlett had spent a lot of time at Mr. Boddy's mansion in the last months of his life. While she reiterated that she was only there to spend time with her fiancé while he worked, Mr. Boddy had said many things during our final meeting that suggested otherwise. Miss Scarlett and Mr. Boddy had been in a love affair for several months, and Mr. Boddy speculated that Professor Plum had started to assume that something was happening between his client and his wife-to-be.

The six of us had two things in common:

1. Whether the accusation was correct or not, we were all being accused of an incredibly serious crime.
2. We all wanted to find out what *really* happened to Mr. Boddy, though one of us already knew.

I'm not sure what they hoped to accomplish by doing so, but the 6 of us were left alone in the dining room while investigators searched the mansion for evidence. As would happen with any group of people whose lives could be ruined if proven guilty, it didn't take long for arguments to break out.

Mr. Green, Mrs. Peacock, and Dr. Orchid cleared their names pretty early in the debate. I stayed quiet at the beginning of it, knowing that anything I said could be taken out of context.

Things got incredibly rocky whenever Miss Scarlett finally revealed the truth about just how close her and Mr. Boddy really were. Not only between her and Professor Plum, but between her and the others as well. The accusations were coming left and right, all aimed at Miss Scarlett. I noticed that the Professor was most adamant about his belief that his fiancé was the culprit. Was it because he was bitter, or because he himself was guilty?

I made my first accusation, suggesting that Professor Plum may have been the one behind the murder. It would not have been so obvious if he wouldn't have been so defensive.

"How could it possibly be me? Why would I ever do such a thing? What would I have to gain from this? Why not Dr. Orchid? She's the one with something to gain from this. Or Miss Scarlett? That.. that floozy has to be somewhere in his will. Or you Colonel? No one seemed to point fingers at you when you were one of the man's closest friends.. when you're the one who practically sleeps with a gun under his pillow!" He nervously rambled on for several minutes until he stopped. "How could it possibly be m-" He sighed and stood up, excusing himself to the restroom.

The rest of us looked around at each other, all thinking the same thing: "How could it *not* be him?" At just the right time, the investigator walked in with a bag in hand and a stern look on his face.

"Where's the Professor?" he asked.

Just after his name was said, a nervous Professor Plum entered the room. He adjusted his tie and stood in the doorway. "I'm right here, detective."

"Just as you were yesterday, Professor?" he asked as he pulled out a rope from the bag. "When you murdered Mr. Boddy, with this rope, in the man's own ballroom."

Everyone gasped and turned towards the Professor.

"Alright, alright, I did it. I didn't know you'd find out so soon, and I, I just," he sighed. "Let's just get this over with, alright?."

And the detective did just that. "Try not to let your wallet fall out of your pocket next time you're trying to not get caught doing something. Fortunately, that won't be possible in prison, so I'm sure you'll have nothing to worry about."

As of now, Professor Plum is awaiting his sentence. And as for the rest of us, I think that it is safe to say we're all glad that our dear friend is another step closer to getting the justice he deserves.

1st place Poetry—High School Division
By: **Carmen Lopez**
Ovey Comeaux High School

“Apathy”

my skull is inside out
and my skin is translucent
revealing the soft-shining nacre
encasing my memory box

the world is inside out
and bubbling forth with
hymns of praise
for creatures pumped with styrofoam
so beautifully lifelike
so fragile to human touch

my shirt is inside out
and buried under mountains of clothing on my floor i collapse onto the center of the
pandemonium to sleep star-shaped for one thousand blissful years counting sheep, footsteps,
exclamation marks as my house collapses onto itself

this building is faulty;
the sheetrock is inside out
its residents are losing themselves
cannibalizing each other
i've locked myself in the bathroom
to survive off of soap
and to make the acquaintance
of the glass man looming above the sink

2nd place Poetry—High School Division
By: **Colton Mayfield**
Ovey Comeaux High School

“Birthday Crash”

Ballpark kids toss empty beer bottles to feel the flutter and admire the burst I am
dangerously in love with the burst—thinking he is more beautiful when set on fire like a
roman candle

I know now that getting old is like the one turn you know from the backseat of a car— The one
that wakes you up no matter how tired you are only instead of hitting your head on the
window—you propel out the backseat and through the windshield & are left with yellow
streaked asphalt to anticipate the green lights—you lie prone to the sky and watch it change
colors all while striking the best roadkill pose—picking a possum for reference—slowly an
eighteenth birthday approaches & the red lights haven’t changed & there is laughter from the
other room—the people blow & the candles go out in flickers & the wax melts into the icing
only to drown in the entourage of monotone, unenthusiastic, passionless birthday song Oddly &
abruptly—that is where the story ends: the candles melt—the crash ensues—the street lights
flicker & your fingers are pointing at you & only you until the pigeons come by and drink what
is left of the wreck—they too hunch over prone & gawk in desperation for something human—
Oddly & abruptly—this is where a story begins: staring at still pigeons—watching the skies
color change & counting them—

four green,

two red,

six light orange—

four sage,

five crimson,

six light apricot

scarlet—

I suppose

The streetlight

Is scarlet.

“Must Have Been Unimportant”

I want to ball my head up in the shape
Of a messenger pigeon & send it along the crowded streets
To pick up a few drinks & shoot two rounds of craps
While absorbing the electric lights
I wake in the morning & call it to return
Knowing there's a chance it won't
I set out bird food the night of

It soars—eats,
Pauses—squawks,
Cries—laughs—
& lies down on my stained gray mattress in silence
I take my fingers & its tendons & jerk around his mouth—
Until he throws up everywhere he has been:
A whole bunch of names that sound local
I told him—*wow, that would make a good story!*

I ask—*can you tell me more?*

I get no response.

I get no response.

3rd place Poetry—High School Division
By: **Madison Lanclos**
Magnet Academy for Cultural Arts

“Heart of the Riddler”

If the up to the down, is the down to the up
And the left to the right, is the right to the left
And the north to the south, is the south to the north,
And the east to the west is the west to the east

Why can't the you to the me, be the me to the you
And the s to the u, be the u to the s
And the us to the together, be the together to the us

Because the u to the s
Spell a word that doesn't make sense
And the sense to the make, is the make to the sense
Does not apply

To the s to the u, being the u to the s
Because the u to the s means the you to the me
And the me to the you, would have to be together
And together, up is down
Left is right, north is south, east is west

And you and me, are two separate words that don't work
And the work to the don't, is the don't to the work
And together, they don't change

I wish they did, because I would love to be yours
But to be yours you have to be mine
And the mine to the yours, is the yours to the mine
And I can't be yours, and you can't be mine

We are apart, two odd pieces
Whose edges are too rigid
And the edges to the rigid, is the rigid to the edges
But our edges are permanent
Which means they don't change

But I wish they did
I wish up WAS down, left WAS right,
And north WAS south, and east WAS west

Because then the s to the u, being the u to the s

WOULD make sense
And the sense to the make, could be the make to the sense
WOULD apply
To the me to the you being together
And our rigid edges, could be filed down
And we could make sense, of this senseless world

We could make the dont to the change, be the change to the doesn't
As in the change doesn't stop us
Because we ARE the change, we made the change
And together, we can be we
Instead of just you and me, or me and you
We can just be together
And together, WE can be permanent

Honorable Mention Poetry—High School Division
By: **Savannah Blanco**
Lafayette High School

“The Flow of Words”

Oh, how I wish
I could write like the greats
Composing plays like Shakespeare
Writing classics like Wilde
P
O
U
R
I
N
G my thoughts and feelings onto the page
The equivalent of a god with no job but to create As I walk through the halls of a school
I feel the colour being taken from young minds
They are being drained, creativity being stolen
No chance left, with focus only on the “core”
The subjects we are subjected to
The machinations of capitalization
But I am left with an e m p t y mind
Like an old author with no books left in print
Libraries left with no walls
Schools per
fect
for
mur
der
We are being built into workers
Not people with dreams
I scream and yell and cry but nobody hears
Pain runs through us like water
But we let it flow back out, pretending it doesn’t exist Oh, how I wish
I could think like great minds
Einstein, Newton, Tesla
Write, no, do math and science like a genius
It’s what I am told to do
Be better
Be better
Be
B E T T E R
Oh how I wish,

I could feel freedom
Forced to pledge myself to a country that's betrayed me
I sit in class and daydream
Being told the real world won't accept that What is the real world?
A place where dreams are killed Where the arts are turned against Oh
how I wish
I could write like the greats
Shelley
Dickinson
Bronte
But no longer do I have that choice