poems by

the young people of Paterson

2019 Paterson Student Poetry Contest

I Am...

Poems by the Young People of Paterson

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A cooperative project between The Poetry Center Passaic County Community College and The Theater and Poetry Project: A Language Arts Enrichment Partnership At Passaic County Community College

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Passaic County Community College

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This 2019 Paterson Student Poetry Contest Anthology is the result of a co-operative project between the Poetry Center at Passaic County Community College, the Theater and Poetry Project: A Language Arts Enrichment Partnership at Passaic County Community College and the Paterson Public Schools. The poems in this book are the winners of the 2019 Poetry Contest for Paterson Students, first through twelfth grades.

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We would like to thank the principals and teachers who encouraged their students to participate in the Contest.

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FIRST PRIZE

Name	Poem	School	Grade	Teacher	Page
Haleem Moore	*My New Home*	Norman S. Weir School	1	Mrs. Mathews	11
Ja'kiyah Briggs	*My Favorite Day*	Norman S. Weir School	2	Mr. Masefield	11
Josue Perez	*My Sister*	Renaissance One	3	Mrs. Ybarra	11
Violet Castenada	*Believe It's Possible*	Norman S. Weir School	4	Ms. Tookmanian	12
Fiorella Del Orbe	*The Love We Need*	School 27	6	Ms. Lockner	13
Salma Y. Ullah	*She Didn't Know*	School 28/ Gifted & Talented	7	Ms. Pazant	14
Ray'Nilah Barrett	*She's Pretty*	Eastside High School	9	Mrs. Waller	15
Ashhab Choudhury	*Who I Was? Who Am I Now?*	Panther Academy	10	Ms. Keehner	13
Imanni Maggette	*I Am*	Academy Of Health Science	11	Ms. Ahn	15

SECOND PRIZE

Ferah Baycora	*The Best Beach*	Dr. Hani Awadallah School	2	Mrs. Coldiron	16
Ke'Miyah Delgado	*Disney World*	School 28	3	Mrs. Sarno	16
Rashad McCoy	*Don't Grow Up Too Fast*	Renaissance One	4	Mrs. McCaffrey	16
Mohamed Abouzid	*Pennsylvania*	School 9	5	Mrs. Fodi	16
Nevaeha James	*When We Were Younger*	School 28/ Gifted & Talented	6	Ms. Pazant	17
Jocelyn Collazo	*I Am*	School 10	8	Ms. Rothstein	18
Kimaada Melvin	*Out The Closet!!*	School 18	8	Mrs.Vena-Marte	17

Gabriela Salgado	*Where I'm From*	Eastside High School, GoPA	9	Mrs. Jurgensen	18
Jose Rosario	*I Am From Cleaning Products*	Eastside High School, GoPA	10	Mrs. Jurgensen	19
Laila Roman	*I Am From Incense*	Eastside High School, GoPA	11	Mrs. Jurgensen	19
Yarissa Guzman	*No Sign of You*	Eastside High School, CAHTS	12	Mrs. Reed	20

HONORABLE MENTION

Name	Poem	School	Grade	Teacher	Page
Prince Delgado	*A Special Day*	School 10	1	Mrs. Solensky	21
Ariyana Reed	*My Special Day*	Alexander Hamilton Academy	1	Mrs. Rudd	21
Jayvin Sauls	*Flying Away Today*	Norman S. Weir School	1	Mrs. Mathews	21
Lovely York	*Mt First Day Of School*	Renaissance One	1	Ms. Bauch	21
Jacob Alvarez	*A New Year to be in Colombia*	Norman S. Weir School	2	Mr. Masefield	22
Alejandra Cornejo	*Cats*	School 18	2	Ms. Rey	22
Damhayani Hernandez	*The Day at Diamond Gymnastics*	Norman S. Weir School	2	Mr. Masefield	22
Sanjana Ahmed	*Great Grandmother's Death*	School 28	3	Ms. Lee	22
Ceyda Baycora	*The Best Birthday Party*	Dr. Hani Awadallah School	3	Mrs. Rackoff	23
Ahmad Manna	*A Beautiful World*	School 28	3	Mrs. Sarno	23
Isabela Mena	*Flying Helicopter*	Norman S. Weir School	3	Ms. Ojeda	23
Syra Robertson	*A Rocket*	Norman S. Weir School	3	Ms. Ojeda	23
Amy Rosa	*My Special Gift*	Renaissance One	3	Mrs. Ybarra	24
Easmin Alom	*May Everyday Be Christams*	School 2	4	MS. S. Williams	24
Ian McDuffie	*Twas The Night Before Christmas*	Norman S. Weir School	4	Ms. Tookmanian	24
Daniel Perez	*Leo The Lion*	Renaissance One	4	Mrs. McCaffrey	25

Javon Perez	*Family Christmas Tree*	School 13	4	Mrs. Blue-Gaskin	25
Ahmad Williams	*I Wish to be President*	Renaissance One	4	Mrs. McCaffrey	25
Boivob Choudhury	*Ode to a Cheez Doodle*	School 28/ Gifted & Talented	5	Mrs. Carrasquillo	26
Amneh Daraghmeh	*My Cat*	School 9	5	Mrs. Fodi	26
Skylar Glisson	*It was Summer*	Norman S. Weir School	5	Ms. Azzolini	26
Alfreisy Jerez-Medina	*Perfect Rose*	School 28/ Gifted & Talented	5	Mrs. Carrasquillo	26
Nahla Lambkin	*How To Dance Like A Tiger*	Norman S. Weir School	5	Mrs. Azzolini	27
Ashley Polanco	*Molly*	Roberto Clemente School	5	Ms. Hanania	27
Destiny Carr	*When The Day is Here*	Norman S. Weir School	6	Ms. Marino	28
Shafin Choudhury	*The Fastest Man Alive*	School 28/ Gifted & Talented	6	Ms. Pazant	28
Alexis Fermin	*The Demon Who Lives In My Mind*	Norman S. Weir School	6	Ms. Marino	27
Fariha Khanom	*5th Grade*	School 28/ Gifted & Talented	6	Mrs. Mola	29
Richardson Belliard	*First Time I Saw My Mom*	Dr. Frank Napier Jr. Academy	7	Miss Capers	30
Amanda Bueno	*My Building*	School 28/ Gifted & Talented	7	Ms. Pazant	29
Brianna D'Luca	*It Is Not A Sin*	School 28/ Gifted & Talented	7	Ms. Pazant	30

Taryn McNeil	*In A Room*	Norman S. Weir School	7	Ms. Marino	31
Melany Morocho	*Rainstorm*	School 28/ Gifted & Talented	7	Ms. Pazant	31
Daniel Fontanella	*The Full Bloom of Our Lives*	Norman S. Weir School	8	Ms. Marino	32
Seline Ruiz	*How Do You See Me*	Norman S. Weir School	8	Ms. Marino	32
Kaliey Sams	*The Limit*	School 18	8	Mrs. Vena-Marte	32
Emily Santana	*Gun Reform*	School 25	8	Mrs. Kunzig	33
Mia Baez	*I Am From Salami*	Eastside High School, GOPA	9	Ms. Jurgensen	33
Ray'Nilah Barrett	*Rules*	Eastside High School	9	Mrs. Waller	34
Amina Cuascut	*You*	International High School	9	Mr. Rayot	34
Justin Proctor	*I Used to Feel Safe*	Eastside High School SOIT	9	Mrs. Jurgensen	33
Farah Elony	*Melanin*	Academy Of Health Science	10	Ms. Ahn	34
Chiara Sanchez	*I Am from Detergent*	Eastside High School, GOPA	10	Mrs. Jurgensen	35
Lizbeth Sanchez	*Close Your Eyes and Count to Three*	Panther Academy	10	Ms. Keehner	35
Ayleen Delgado	*Accused*	Academy of Health Science	11	Mrs. Spiliotopoulos	36
Lavar Fair	*The Black Purse*	Academy of Health Science	11	Mrs. Spiliotopoulos	36

Shahana Hussain	*Bicycle*	Academy of Health Science	11	Mrs. Spiliotopoulos	37
Kennedy Rodriguez	*Sweet Lullaby Full of Lies*	Eastside High School	11	Misses Carter, Kendra, and Wilson	37
Luis DeVargas	*You Wished You'd Helped*	Eastside High School, CAHTS	12	Mrs. Reed	38
Keyla Gondres	*Has It Ever Occurred to You*	Academy of Health Science	12	Ms. Ahn	37

My New Home
Haleem Moore – Grade 1

I was happy…so very happy!
My new mom and dad took me to my new home.
I loved my new bed and my special new room, too.
It made me feel happy and loved.

I have a beautiful mom!
I have a cool dad!
My sister is pretty fantastic, too!
We all make a great new family
In my home that is new.

For this new place and family
I am very, very glad!
My family is a great gift for me to have!

My Favorite Day
Ja'kiyah Briggs – Grade 2

My favorite day was when I went to Disney
But the rides and the fun were not the best part
I got to see my DAD!

I gave him a big hug.
I held him tight.

That was the last day-
That I saw my dad.

My Sister
Josue Perez – Grade 3

You might be annoying.
And have a lot to learn.
But for a four year old
You're really tough.

Though you cry for no reason,
As if you're in a play,
I beam with joy when you're around.

You're always awake
And turn on all the lights.

Mom bought play-doh just for me,
I told you to take one,
But you took all three.
Now I have an excuse for my dad to buy more.

Your games aren't fun at all, I really mean it.
Who wants to chase dolls?
I like to play with my dinosaurs
I pull your hair and you pull mine,
It hurts, but I don't care
You're my sister.

Believe It's Possible
Violet Castenada – Grade 4

On the night of a friend's quinceañera celebration,
My mom couldn't wait for this special occasion.

Then news no one could have ever expected,
She was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease, it was almost undetected.

My Grandma was heartbroken, as any mother would be,
Her daughter was only 16, so young and carefree.

My mom had to undergo many treatments and test,
The doctor's insisted she get lots of rest.

It was long journey before the cancer went into remission,
But a life full of love and a family was her only mission.

As the years passed, she would be tested annually,
To make sure she continued to be cancer free.

But a few years ago, her test results didn't seem right,
And her doctor explained, it was cancer she would have to fight.

And so again her battle began,
Treatment and tests were the doctor's plan.

This time the diagnosis was Thyroid cancer,
And removing her thyroid was the only answer.

The surgery was a great success, thankfully,
Each day a little better, with the help of her family.

To this day, every 3 months, she has to have tests done,
But now, her kids make her feel that the battle she's won.

The scars are reminders of all that she's been through,
An amazing daughter, wife, and mom, *I love you* this poem is for you.

The Love We Need
Fiorella Del Orbe – Grade 6

Hate, hate, hate
Hate is a strong word
It's all around us
Parents abandoning their children for no reason,
Families being separated
Because they don't have the right papers,
People harming others,
Because they are lost and have nothing to live for
Where did all the peace and love go?
All the families who are suffering,
People all over the world dying,
Waking up to bombs as their alarm clocks,
Children running to shelters;
What kind of world are we really living in?
Why do we ruin the world like we do?
Why didn't we learn from previous wars?
What good does it do to HURT?
We see bad things happening; but we don't stop them,
It's like a fire too strong to be put out,
Extinguishing the love from our hearts
What reason do we have to harm others?
Because they have different skin color
Because their beliefs are not the same as ours
Why do we need a Wall to separate people?
A Wall that will only create pain and division
As a great man once said," I Have A Dream."
A dream to end the hate,
A dream for peace for all the people of the world
We can make my Dream come true if we all,
BELIEVE!

Who I Was? Who Am I Now?
Ashhab Choudhury – Grade 10

A boy, who was 11 years old
who came from a tropical country in South Asia
across the Atlantic Ocean.
In December, one afternoon, when the sun was
shining as bright as a gold but there was a cold breeze blowing then young star set a foot on land.

He was astonished about whatever he saw,
On the other hand, language, weather, and climate
everything was against him.
He never forgot how he felt on the first day of school. Everything was new even the environment but the sorrows he
felt while communicating with fellow classmates and teachers was inexpressible only because he didn’t understand the language.

Two years later, his sorrows
are gone, now he is very joyful,
he can communicate with everybody
and adapt to climate changes especially when the snow comes, he enjoys.

At this moment, his dream is to
become a famous English writer.
Because he believes, END is not the END,
In fact E.N.D.means “Effort Never Dies”.

She Didn't Know

Salma Y. Ullah – Grade 7

"Passport, Please"...
"Anything edible in there?"...
"Welcome to the United States of America!"

Ah yes finally, the land of freedom and dreams
No more broken roads or houses
No more muddied pathways
Now it was time to live a life of luxury

The airport was surrounded by strangers,
But she did not mind it
Everything new, so much more developed
Her provincial mind could not grasp it all yet

But what is this moving thing on the floor?(a moving walkway)
She jumped right on,
And giddily took advantage of its use
Not knowing the transience of her emotions

What she didn't know was
The smell on her that caught their eyes,
Her male cousins' hand-me-downs
the hairstyle that was no longer in vogue
Her speech that held the guilt of a foreigner
They defined her as "immigrant"
But this was nothing compared to what her family faced

She didn't know
That while she went to school and made friends
Her mother worked two jobs and her father three
That her two older sisters walked two miles
Even in the icy winter, to get to school.

Once she learned, her giddy personality changed
She worked hard in school
So that her parents' sacrifices paid off
And grew in the face of adversity

Who is "she"?
She is my older,
Wiser,
Very beautiful sister,
My role model,
And one of my best supporters.

She's Pretty
Ray'Nilah Barrett – Grade 9

She's pretty he said
She's pretty for that end of the scale
If you know What I mean
She's pretty for that race
She's pretty for a black girl the
White face said to me
Why must I be pretty for a black girl?
Why can't I just be pretty?
When you see two women walking down
The hall one darker skinned one lighter
do you not see beauty in that chocolate
Women?
Because I do
When I come to you and speak with a smile
Why must I "Not act black"
What does that even mean?
Do you expect me to be hostile
Because I had a great day

Today I went to the mall and the
Woman told me my caramel skin and
afro-hair mixed with my bright smile was
gorgeous
told me I could be a model
But everyday I wake up and look
in that mirror all I can see
Is pretty . . .
for a black girl
that sentence you spoke to that
8 year old
those words you said to that 10 year old
She's now insecure not by looks
She knows she's beautiful told everyday
but by race

pick up ya head ma
poke that lip back in
Know ya beautiful on the
Outside . . .
The inside
In the skin side
NOT
pretty for a black girl.

I Am
Imannni Maggette – Grade 11

I am from a country that fears my people
I am from a place where some people think
colored skin can rub off
I am from a place that forces girls to hide
their face because their beauty doesn't
match America's ideal
I am from a place where people think
wearing weave means you're bald
I am from a place where black teens get
shot for having hoodies on
I am from a place where mothers worry
about their sons
I am from a country that has had 8 school
shootings in the past year
I am from a place where guns solve most
problems
I am from a place where girls wear less to
attract more
But what my country fails to realize is there's
much more

I am someone that'll never hurt a fly
I am proud of my melanin skin that glows
when the sun beams
I am a girl that loves my face no matter how
big some features may be
I am a girl that snatches her friends hoodie
off because of fear
I am a female that prays for all students to
stay protected
I am a girl that knows education is my
strongest weapon
I am a girl that covers up because beauty is
within
I am filled with blood that traces back to
slaves, warriors, and queens
I see beauty within me, but darkness within
my country

The Best Beach
Ferah Baycora – Grade 2

Blue clear waves, boats, and people,

Waves splashing,

Salty corn, and sweet watermelon,

Sunscreen, juice and the smell of joy,

This is the best beach in the world.

Disney World
Ke'Miyah Delgado – Grade 3

I played with Donald, and Daisy too.
I went on a ride just for you. My
memories are full as an anthill.
And it's as busy as a factory
I went on a ride with my family for you.
Next time I come,
Memories, can you come
Again too?

Don't Grow Up Too Fast
Rashad McCoy – Grade 4

A kid does not have a lot of responsibilities
that adults do
Adults pay the bills,
Get jobs
Find a place to live
We just have to hit the books
and be kids

Don't grow up too fast
before you know it
you will be stuck between a rock and a hard
place.
Just enjoy yourself. Don't be spiteful.
Treat people the way you want to be
treated.

Don't grow up too fast
Be thankful for what you have
You don't need to copy somebody
If they get the next big thing
Just be yourself,
Make your life enjoyable
Be you.

Pennsylvania
Mohamed Abouzid – Grade 5

In Pennsylvania, nature was growing on
me like moss on a tree
As we were driving we stumbled across
mountains next to a farm
I wish I could live on that farm and
breathe all the fresh air.
The mountains looked like white
bearded giants
The water flowed like a long blue snake
The water was as cold as the North Pole
In morning the sweet smell of amazing
Hershey chocolates filled my nose
And the sight of the majestic animals in
the zoo left an impression in my mind
forever.

When We Were Younger
Nevaeha James – Grade 6

When we were younger,
We were full of imagination.
Making beautiful things,
Out of our inspiration.
No weight on our shoulders,
Because we could do anything.
Following the yellow brick road,
Accomplishing everything.

When we were younger,
Sure we didn't have the strength.
But we believed in ourselves,
We could push any weight
Leaping around,
Avoiding it all.
We could defeat any monster,
And we never would fall.

When we were younger,
We would not take defeat.
Using the sword of justice,
"I'm bringing the heat!".
You'd never see us cry,
And never see us fall.
You and I both know,
We'd give it our all.

And even when we did break,
We have our family by our side.
No matter what was happening,
They'd have their arms opened wide.
They'd say "Never give up!"
"You can do this!"
And you'd sit there,
Feeling full with bliss

And this is why as we grow,
We're learning more and more.
Like a baby bird into
An eagle that can soar
You may look at those days
Wishing you could go back
But don't forget the things
You have now they might lack

Out The Closet!!
Kimaada Melvin – Grade 8

I'm stuck in the closet

There's no way out.
I'm stuck with my resistance
My feelings
My doubt

I'm stuck in the closet
Not showing my true colors
Maybe there is a way out?
I just want to break my silence
I just want to shout

I'm waiting impatiently for one special day
To come out to my family and tell them I'm gay.
Maybe that day isn'ttoday
Or even tomorrow
But when it is that day, IL'll know it
And I'll shout it with honor.

I Am
Jocelyn Collazo – Grade 8

I am Independent and strong
I wonder how many people actually care about me
I see kids all day
I want kids to spell better
I am Independent and strong

I pretend to not cry when I'm hurt
I feel depressed when someone makes me feel worthless
I touch my cat to make me happy
I worry that my parents won't be able to provide for themselves
I cry when I see my parents struggle
I am Independent and strong

I understand that times will be tough
I say when I'm older I will help my family
I dream that my parents will be all right one day
I try my best everyday
I hope I can make them proud one day
I am Independent and strong

Where I'm From
Gabriela Salgado – Grade 9

I am from detergent,
from Tide and Clorox.
I am from the big two family house on Warren street.
(dangerous, hot,
the gunshots ring in my ears and echo in the night.)
I am from a barren front yard,
the silver gate, the small patch of grass that leads to the hails.
I'm from Dia de los reyes and "lava los platos",
From Javier and Cathia.
I'm from the bipolar family and rude people,
From "I'll give you something to cry about"
and "lo que no mata no engorda".
I'm from the never went to church family.
I'm from Puerto Rico the islands,
the big perniles and the pasteles.
From the Javier and Jessica falling down the stair,
The Javier getting surgery for his stomach,
The photos up on the walls,
They show the memories of me when I was little.

I Am From Incense
Laila Roman – Grade 11

I am from incense
From original botanica and burning plants
I am from 17th Ave.
Well known, dangerous, loud trains that pass by
I am from a plantain plant, very green and long
I'm from the family gatherings and humorous personalities
From Natisha and Edward
I'm from the blasting of music playing and laughs from jokes
From "I'll give you something to cry about" and "Do you have McDonald's money"
I'm from a family that sometimes go to church or not at all.
I'm from the Air force base hospital in Japan
Arroz con gandules, fried chicken
From the crazy situations and run ins with my family
The loving but don't play grandmother
Where photo frames are on the TV stand and hung on the walls
It's very sentimental reminds you of a lot of memories

I Am From Cleaning Products
Jose Rosario – Grade 10

I am from cleaning products
From dollar dish detergent and awesome!
I am from the cube-sized rooms, comfortable and fit
Noisy, loving, and the smell of coffee moving into your nostrils
I am from pine trees
Tall, old, full of so many memories, and melancholy
I'm from salsa dancing during Thanksgiving and tanned skin
From Milagros Valido and Jose Rosario Sr.
I'm from the arguments and forgiveness
From "I'll give you something to cry about." and "I don't have money."
I'm from the blessings and hopes and dreams
I'm from Paterson and Villalba
Rice and beans, mangu
From the stories of my father being chased with me in a car
The older sisters that bully me and made me laugh
In my mind where everyone is together living well in memory
Each item we share little or small, keeps life in who we are

No Sign Of You

Yarissa Guzman – Grade 12

Today, I woke up with silence in the house,
With no sign of you.

In a strange surrounding where I couldn't see you.
Where had you gone?

I had ask the wall about you,
But it refused to answer.

Even ask the floor to track you,
But it refused to help.

Imploring to the ceiling to search for you,
But it refused to look.

So I closed my eyes,
Hoping to find you.
But my eyes seem to loss you in the search.

And you're gone.

When tomorrow starts without you by my side,
There will be no sunrise,
Just my eyes filled of tears for you.

I wish so much you wouldn't go,
The way you did,
There were so much things left behind,
So much left unsaid.

I know we would meet again,
And we never go far apart again.

A Special Day
Prince Delgado – Grade 1

Christmas is my special day.
I get to run and play.
I get to help my dad in the kitchen
Making Santa snacks.

This day is also about
Giving to those in need.
To all the little girls and boys,
I love to give Christmas toys.

My Special Day
Ariyana Reed – Grade 1

My Grandpa's party was at my house,
So we ordered a cake and
We surprised grandpa,
He was happy
So we sang,
Happy Birthday
He let me cut the cake
I had fun on my special day.

Flying Away Today
Jayvin Sauls – Grade 1

I packed all my summer clothes.
My shoes came, too!
My grandma bought the tickets
And away we flew!

We went in a huge airplane,
Flying above the clouds!
My heart was all happy
To have fun in the crowds.

To Florida we went,
To see Mickey and Minnie and water rides to take a dip
My dream to go to Disney
Came true on this trip!

I was very happy and lucky and loved
It can't be beat!
My trip to Florida was a special treat
From my Grandma who is so very sweet!

My First Day of School
Lovely York – Grade 1

I was so excited for first grade.
I could scream!
My classroom was like a dream.

My teacher's name was Ms. Bauch.
She was very nice and kind.

I had the best day ever in my new school.
My first day of school.

A New Year to be in Colombia
Jacob Alvarez – Grade 2

It's a new year to be in Columbia
Family gathers around
They go on vacation to the country they are from

It's a new year to be in Columbia
Your family is waiting for you to arrive
They will celebrate and have a party!

It's a new year to be in Columbia
My grandma goes back and forth to our country
But when she is there-
She is missed in New Jersey!

Cats
Alejandra Cornejo – Grade 2

So cute and pointy ears
So soft and fluffy
Sometimes scratches me
Long furry tails
Scared of dogs
Long whiskers
I love cats,
Do you?

The Day at Diamond Gymnastics
Damhayani Hernandez – Grade 2

We gathered together
And did incredible flips.

We gathered together
And jumped on the trampolines.

We gathered together
And did outstanding tricks.

We gathered together
For our friend's birthday celebration.

We gathered together
To make memories with friends!

A Rocket
Syra Robertson – Grade 3

A rocket so fast so nice and so calm

It glides like the angels from heaven
I saw the angels calling me back to the rocket

That glides in the air like a shooting star
That reaches through the air at nighttime

A child looked out the window one night
And he saw his dad up in the rocket

And his dad looked down and he winked
He made the clouds say good night

Great Grandmother's Death
Sanjana Ahmed – Grade 3

It was unexpected,
Sad.
My heart melted like chocolate in the microwave.
Me and my cousins were all in the basement
.
We heard loud noises, thump thump.
Our parents said "Come upstairs."
I'm like *huh*?
Everyone is going cuckoo.
This is crazy.
My precious relative great grandmother died.
I might cry.
I looked around the room.
I didn't even know what to do?
I see everyone in tears.
Suddenly tears fell from my eyes.
I didn't know who died.
Then I did. She was the loveliest person I ever met.
Everyone cried very much.
After that it was lunch.
Lunch ended. We all made prayers to God.
Bunch of people cried.
My mind was crazy on the outside.

The Best Birthday Party
Ceyda Baycora – Grade 3

A bunch of balloons floating in the air,
Games and confetti everywhere,
Decorations hanging from the ceilings,
Lots for yummy food to eat,
Lots of good presents to open and see,
Sweet colorful cakes to eat with people everywhere,
Happy Happy Birthday to me!

A Beautiful World
Ahmad Manna – Grade 3

I want a world without war
I want a world with shores
I want a world without crime
I want a world with chimes
A beautiful world to soar.

I want a world without fights
I want a world with rights
I want a world without poor
I want a world with doers
A beautiful world full of lights.

Flying Helicopter
Isabela Mena – Grade 3

Why not a flying helicopter that bounces like a bumblebee
That jumps like a rabbit
That winds like a robot
That twirls like a ballerina
Hopping, jumping, day and night
What a wonderful treat to bring food to every single one in the city
It could land on top of a building
On top of a waterfall
Could it be more wonderful to every single person?
Why not?

My Special Gift
Amy Rosa – Grade 3

Excitement,
No one was frightened

Presents under the tree
Stacked like layers of a cake.

I began to open one,
My eyes as big as plates.

Under all the wrapping,
I saw it
A laptop.

I was as happy as a kid on their birthday,
I didn't feel sleepy anymore.

It wasn't my favorite color, but I didn't care
To me,
it was as pretty as a heart

My laptop
My present,
My Special Day

May Everyday Be Christmas
Easmin Alom – Grade 4

May every day be Christmas
Not just one day
Not just one night
Loving, giving, sharing
Putting up bells
Putting up lights
Need not just one day
May every day be Christmas
Not just one day
Not just one night
May every day be Christmas

Twas The Night Before Christmas
Ian McDuffie – Grade 4

'Twas the night before Christmas no one was seen,
Not even a big jolly man dressed in red, white, and green.
Alone in my bed in a room filled with two,
Suddenly I heard a bump in the night and knew exactly what to do.

I sprang from my bed and reached for my light,
I grabbed my sister's camera and thought tonight is going to be a good night!
I crept down the stairs with the greatest of ease,
And thought to myself, I better not sneeze.

I looked around the corner only to find,
A green bag, black boots, and a big red behind.
Under the tree, which was once bare,
There were buckets of coal just sitting there.

Before I knew it, he turned around with a big sigh,
Then I spoke up, "But I was good guy."
He stood up straight and cupped his beard,
And mumbled to himself, "Oops this is weird."

He had snow white dreads that touched his shoulder,
He looked 60 but could've been older.
Then he said, "No one deserves presents not a soul in sight."
Then left joyfully saying, "Happy Christmas to all and to all a good night!"

Leo The Lion
Daniel Perez – Grade 4

Leo the Lion
My childhood best friend
I took him everywhere
Where places glare

He was such a beloved friend

He was a fuzzy, fun time
a toy
Caramel colored stuffed lion
He was an adventurer
We would go far and wide
He was as brave as Indiana Jones
He was a tough companion
My right hand man
My bedtime buddy
My deputy

He was always there when I needed him most
He was everything

Leo the Toy Lion

Family Christmas Tree
Javon Perez – Grade 4

My family is like a Christmas tree
My grandma is the Christmas tree always holding our love.
My little brother Jayceon is the candy cane with a big sweet tooth always eating his candy.
My mom is the ornament so pretty and bright.
My aunt Dionna is the star at the top shining brightly.
I am the sprig growing the love in our family.

I Wish to be President
Ahmad Williams – Grade 4

I wish to be president when I grow up
If I was president
I would
Help the homeless
Give to charity
Lower taxes
And help my country

I wish to be president when I grow up
Because
I am kind
I am honest
I am trustworthy
I am responsible
I am diligent
I am bright
I am insightful
I am idealistic

I wish to be president when I grow up
When I am president
The country will be
Safer
Cleaner
Stronger
President Ahmad Williams

Ode to a Cheez Doodle
Boivob Choudhury – Grade 5

I search the grocery store in haste
To find that sweet lip-smacking taste.
And there it is in aisle nine
It's just a dollar thirty-nine!

A bag of Doodles most delicious
Check the label: they're nutritious!
And do you know how satisfied
I feel munching Doodles fried?

I savor each bright orange curl
Until it seems I might just hurl.
Their praises I will always sing,
Cheez Doodles are my everything!

Perfect Rose
Alfreisy Jerez-Medina – Grade 5

I pick out a rose,
Picture perfect, like you,
Look into your eyes,
All I see are roses that bloom,
Dark red lips,
Dark like petals,
Delicate as a rose,
Your touch so warm,
Waiting for the sun,
Waiting for her love,
A love that burns,
Burns like the sun!
Sensitive as a rose,
Petals that may fall with just a touch,
I imagine all the thorns hurting you,
You bleed and you cry for me,
Blood as red, red as that rose,
Pick out a rose picture perfect, like you.

My Cat
Amneh Daraghmeh – Grade 5

My cat's meow is like a lion's roar, she is as friendly as a best friend.
Her claws are like sharp knives, her fluffy fur is like a ball of clouds,
She has whiskers like a piece of untied yarn, she can jump up high
Like a big frog, she is as sneaky as a robber stealing food, her nose
Is as wet as a pool of water, her eyes are as sharp as a glowing jewel,
Her fur is as gray as a stone.
Hera

It Was Summer
Skylar Glisson – Grade 5

It was summer,
I'd remember all the good times
The good times we'd laugh, play, and talk
Again, again, again, and never stop
I remember all the songs
She would sing to me at night
I never wanted to lose her or her arms around me so tight
Everyone knew her
She was somewhat outspoken
She loved everyone and everything that loved her
Her doors were always open for anyone
Even though she has passed on to Heaven
I will always remember the things we did together
All the memories replay in my head
Again, again, and once again
All the cries and laughs we shared together
We have a bond that can't be broken
Even if we're a sky away
Remembering each other is our token.

How to Dance Like a Tiger
Nahla Lambkin – Grade 5

Stretch pants, tennis shoes
The attire of a dance crew
We bring the moves, we never lose
You know we will out dance you

Don't feel ashamed, no one to blame
You bring the music, we'll bring the flame
You know the drill step 1,2 times,
Bring it back, fall in line

Come with the heat, move your feet
Pay attention and don't miss the beat
Dance is our life, dance is our passion
We show up and dominate in a timely fashion

Like tigers we roar, like stars we soar
Say the word, we'll finish the war
We're in your face, you know your place
You wish you knew what it felt like to win first place.

The Demon Who Lives in my Mind
Alexis Fermin – Grade 6

He lives in my head
and comes out when
I am depressed, dark inside
No emotion and,
when there is no storage of hope.
That black shadow
In my head comes out to be strong and try to haunt me
And make me depressed.
But, I can fight it.
I am stronger.
In my mind I erase all the bad and depressed thoughts.

Molly
Ashley Polanco – Grade 5

Christmas, oh Christmas
A jolly time of year
I run down the stairs carefully
With a feeling of cheer
The snow is as fluffy and white as a pillow
The presents jumbled under the tree
I look at a gift of mine. It's a happy guarantee!
I rip open the gift with a smile on my face
Oh it's finally happening, the gift I've always wanted
I opened the box
A black puppy inside
Tears running down my face as I cried
I took the puppy and snuggled it
It was a girl barking happily
Big black eyes, tears still rolling down
Petting her silky black hair
I took care of her like a child
She loved me too
I couldn't think of anything better
Than the puppy running around
She is so special to me
My world wouldn't turn without her

When The Day is Here
Destiny Carr – Grade 6

When the day is here, I'm going to be in tears.
When the day is here, my mom is going to feel fear.
When the day is here, I'm going to feel ashamed.
When the day is here, I'm not going to forgive myself for not being near.
When the day, is here I'm going to be broken like a frame.
When the day is here, I'm going to have tears running down my face.
When the day is here, I'm going to have hair standing up everywhere.
When the day is here, I'm going to be clenching my pillow saying, "no!"
Not this day.
When the day is here, I will feel chills.
When the day is here, I'm going to feel away from here.

The Fastest Man Alive
Shafin Choudhury – Grade 6

A normal person with a job
Walking down Central City
As a forensics scientist for a police station
Working on cases to stop criminals
Then out of nowhere,in his lab,struck by lightning
Being flung into a cabinet of chemicals
In a coma for 9 months, waking up and having powers
His name you may ask
His name is Barry Allen and he is the flash

With the help of others at Star Labs
He learns how to control his powers
He fights criminals with super powers
He stops them before they hurt others
When sadly he can't do anything to stop the most painful thing
The death of his mother and father
One killed by a speedster in yellow
Another killed by a speedster in black

When being able to travel through time comes to him
He needs to learn to fight back
He adapts to his surroundings
Learns how to phase through objects at the right frequency
Learns how to travel through time
Learns how to throw lightning
He learns how to do this because he is Barry Allen
He is The Fastest man alive
He is The Flash

5th Grade
Fariha Khanom – Grade 6

It was a normal year,
Except the fact that I was new in the school.
I was sitting in class,
Wanting it to last.
A couple weeks past,
Quite normal and fast
I had made a couple friends,
Who I want till the end.
We had parties quite often,
But every time I spent time with my friends,
My heart would soften.
Then I realized,
That I belonged with them.
All throughout the year,
We had so much fun.
All the parties and laughs,
Making me not wanting to be anywhere else.
With a "HAHA",
And a "AHA",
I felt like there was my true home.
Even the teachers were loving,
I did not want to let go.
But then the last day of the best year came,
Making me let go.
I am in the 6th grade now,
Still missing my past.
But I still have the people,
That made me love this place,
Called school.
I just wanna let everyone know that 5th grade,
Was the year I enjoyed the most.

In My Building
Amanda Bueno – Grade 7

Life is a weird journey
There are a lot of things that it can be compared to like a roller coaster or even sometimes a corn maze
To me, life is almost like a building
The bricks are like the things that make up who you are as a person
Everyone's life is different
People go through different things and have different emotions
Just like how every building has different items inside
Some valuable and heart-warming and others not so much
Sometimes it feels like your life is falling apart or that you're not strong enough to hold it together
I feel like that sometimes
Everyone does at some point
You just need the right people to help you and give you the strength that you need to hold it up
With every new experience comes new difficulties
With every new level in a building comes something else to worry about
Life is an interesting thing
I don't think it matters how old you are or where you are
You make yourself the unique person that you are
I have my flaws and I get bored with my everyday life sometimes too
But I know that there are people around me who I love and care for that are here to help me hold my building up

First Time I Saw My Mom
Richardson Belliard – Grade 7

One morning I was at my grandmother's house
she asked me to stay over
I agreed without any doubt
Hours passed
I was tired and fell asleep,
Minutes later a woman walks into my room
And lays down right next to me
I awake, surprised and confused.
I ask her who she is
As she holds me with angelic arms
And uttered I am the one who birthed you
I felt my heart turn into stone and drop all the way to my legs,
Churning my bones
Next day arrived and we go to the beach
My dad, my mom, and little o me.
Although time passed quickly,
It felt like we remade history.

It Is Not a Sin
Brianna D'Luca – Grade 7

You tell me it's a sin
To be in love with her
And not with him
You say those thoughts are wrong
And people like that don't belong
You say that if I truly am that way I don't belong too
Do you seriously believe that is true
And you say I'm just a confused little girl
Trying to figure out how I fit in this world
But why don't you understand
That I am the way that I am
Because my mom and sister have accepted it
It's just you who can't seem to get it
And I understand you may have a fear
That your little girl is all grown up
But I'll talk you just have to listen to what I have to say
And maybe you'll get it one day
I just want you to know
I may be a confused girl
And I am still trying to figure out how I fit in this world
But I am still that same little girl I was five years ago
And I just want my father to tell me that I'm not alone
It is not a sin
To be in love with her
And not with him

Rainstorm
Melany Morocho – Grade 7

Gray clouds gather in the sky
Rolling and clashing
Thunder roars all around
Each boom loud and deafening
The wind has become
Ferocious lions battling
Deadly and roaring

Trees bow under the wind
No match for its power
Animals run for safety
Terrified of the rumble
The Sun fights to keep shining
But even it is covered
By the dark blanket in the sky

Rain pummels the ground
Turning the dirt into mud
Filling rivers up to the brim
Nourishing trees and plants
They feel like tiny bullets
Against your skin
Cold and refreshing

Houses grumble and groan
Complaining about the wind
That thrashes and surges
Doors are pummeled
Windows creak precariously
While others shatter
A strangely musical sound
Amidst the roaring gale
Rain pounds against the roof
Mercilessly and endlessly
It plinks on the glass
Then just as suddenly
As it began
The rain begins to
Slow down
And eventually stops
The thunder fades
The lions cease roaring

The Sun carefully peeks out
From behind a cloud
Slowly but surely
The Sun shines brighter
Scaring away the gray clouds
That once covered the sky
Making way for a blue sky
Fluffy clouds now replace
Angry ones

Raindrops shine on leaves
Bright as diamonds
They drip of roofs with a
Sploosh and a splash
The woods are alive
With birds chirping to welcome
A brighter day
A new day

In A Room
Taryn McNeil – Grade 7

In a room,
all alone.
My parents screaming out my door.
Words like, "I hate you" come out their mouths.
And I cry while thinking,
"They're getting divorced."
But then,
I wake up.
To my mom's bruised eye, and smiling faces.
They were happy again.

In a room,
surrounded by children.
They treat me like garbage.
They tell me I'm ugly,
and I feel useless.
I wish people liked me.
To them, they see me:
A girl with black hair
Brown eyes
A skinny body
They don't care about my feelings.
It's like I'm their punching bag.
But then,
the teacher walks in.
And they're my friends.

The Full Bloom of Our Lives
Daniel Fontanella – Grade 8

It's green
It's blue
It's yellow
It's red
It comes in all shapes, colors, and sizes
It's everywhere and sometimes nowhere
It's ubiquitous, and sometimes nonexistent
It is and can be life or death
It is our world and our destroyer
It is our light and also our darkness
It is our peace, but also our war
Our world is like a flower, we are always in bloom but we are always wilting
The penultimate stage before wilting is full bloom
of a flower's life

The Limit
Kaliey Sams – Grade 8

They say the sky is the limit!

We're limited to where we can go.
We're limited to equality.
We're limited to opportunities.
We're limited to success.
We're limited to freedom.

Is the sky really the limit?
Then, explain to me why I feel like
an animal limited to a cage!!!

How Do You See Me
Seline Ruiz – Grade 8

How do you see me?

As a girl?
Brown hair?
Brown eyes?
White skin?

Or do you see the real me?

A Hispanic?
With a mother from Dominican Republic
With a father from Puerto Rico?

What do you think about me now?

Do you think I wear hoop earrings?
Do you think I wear red lipstick?
Do you think I know English?

The real question is
How do you see me?
Are your views accurate
or
Are they just a stereotype?

Gun Reform
Emily Santana – Grade 8

This is a touchy subject,
And not everyone will agree
The government avoids this
Cause when it comes to money they're in need.

From mini guns to bigger ones,
Schools, churches, and bars.
This won't protect the families
Not mine, yours, or ours.

We needed reformation in the past as we need it today,
But now there is a battle between citizens and the NRA.
We march for our lives to let the government know,
That the second amendment needs to go!

Students are now afraid to get an education.
Please tell me how does that make us into a strong healthy nation?
We need a change, for we should start now.
I believe that shootings should not be allowed.

Now when that gun shoots POW POW POW POW!
And people are protesting outside the White House,
The world is getting out of the norm,
The answer to this catastrophe is gun reform.

I Am From Salami
Mia Baez – Grade 9

I am from salami
From nestle and goya
I am from the small
hot, lighter, quite
I am from savila,
large and dangerous
I'm from holiday with the whole family and their light brown eye color
From Joselyn and Nathalie
I'm from the having fun with my sister and go out with my cousin
From ''tu si jode'' and ''te voy a dar''
I'm from a friendly family, a Catholic family
I'm from Dominican Republic
Habichuela con dulce, pastelon
From the my cousin named Bryan lost in Santiago
The uncle's family saying weird things
My grandmother's picture in the living room
It is important because she put it there and we leave it after she passed away.

I Used to Feel Safe
Justin Proctor – Grade 9

I used to feel safe when you were here
But now I feel really lost without you
I always think of the good times
But I never forgot about the things you taught me
I once looked up to you as my idol
But now I use you as my motivation
If I could bring you back
I would do it in a heartbeat
I never wanted to lose you
But I might just keep my head up
I can't stop thinking about all those times together
But I can believe that you're doing better up there
But I might break down sometimes
I used to feel safe when you were here
But now I feel really lost without you

Rules
Ray'Nilah Barrett – Grade 9

produce the kids fix his tie
Do ya hair and stay in line

rules, rules, rules

Make the money? You can't do that
Sit back clean the house now relax

rules, rules, rules

Cook the food it must taste great
Settle down after fixing his plate

rules, rules, rules

follow these rules and you shall have
a perfect life you won't be sad

rules, rules, rules

The perfect wife your husband wants
is an air headed dummy to fix his lunch

rules, rules, rules

You can count me out that won't be me
Sitting around and cleans a fee
You'll lose your youth and lose your life
For a man whose waiting on his next wife.

rules, rules, rules

You
Amina Cuascut – Grade 9

you are the voice that silences mine
you are the person in disguise
you are the one that causes me pain,
the one that makes blood rush through my veins
you are the person that tells me not to think,
yet that's all I can do
the one that tells me it's not important,
yet it is
I need help, and you know it
but you won't let me have it
you always think of everyone else, yet you don't think of me.
why do you treat me like this?
like I don't matter at all.
you give everyone else advice and try to solve everyone else's problems,
yet you don't help solve mine
I would tell you to stop but I can't.
why do you do this to me?
will you ever go away?
no, you tell me
why do I always listen to you?
oh right,
because "you" are me

Melanin
Ferah Elony – Grade 10

Dark Skin is appealing and doesn't need concealing
Look, my brown skin is glistening
No need for a brightening cream, I'm a sunshine Queen!
My melanin is an example of dark, creamy, chocolate
I'm rich and pure.
I'm beautiful. No one can change my mind. My color is a gift from my ancestors. I won't disown it.
I'm not pretty for a black girl. I'm pretty and that is final.

I Am From Detergent
Chiara Sanchez – Grade 10

I am from detergent
From Suavitel and Fabuloso
I am from a medium sized house
Warm, comfortable, the smell of sazon that comes every time my grandmother cooks
I am from an oregano kernel
A small, green plant
I'm from going to church on new years eve and dark brown eyes
From Yocasta and Nieve
I'm from the yelling and watching novelas
From "Si te caes te voy a dar" and "Si te dan, dale le pa' tras"
I'm Christian family, always going to church on Sundays
I'm from Dominican Republic
rice , meat
From the time my cousin fell on her butt while riding rolling skates
The black, curly hair
We put most of our pictures in the living room
They're important because they're irreplaceable and they hold so many happy memories that it would be tragedy if something happened to them.

Close Your Eyes and Count to Three
Lizbeth Sanchez – Grade 10

One…Two…Three…
A screen grabs my eyes
My heart beat was dropping
An odd mask of sadness was displayed beside me
They told the mask I wasn't going to make it
I wake up into a long journey with brief happiness
One.. Two…Three...
I was just a kid
Her hands were unwanted
Their eyes were filled with anger
But they all stared at me
One… Two…Three…
Disowned
Hungry
Alone
One… Two…Three…
I'm still alone
No one would look at me
One…Two…Three…
I've become their clown
One… Two…Three…
As all teenagers say, "I can't wait until I'm 18."

Accused
Ayleen Delgado – Grade 11

I stood there confused.
The yelling could be heard over the music,
As heads turned to watch the scene.
Punches about to be thrown.

The yelling could be heard over the music.
A man accusing my family,
As punches were about to be thrown.
My mom and a woman pulling a bottle back and forth.

A man accusing my family.
Accusing us of buying the bottle of alcohol somewhere else.
The man threatening to hit my aunt.
People drinking while watching.

Accusing us of buying the bottle of alcohol somewhere else.
People whispering to each other
As my family were trying to pull my uncle away form the man.
She pulled my hand saying she needed to use the restroom.

Music was still blasting,
As heads turned to watch the scene.
We walked outside.
I stood there confused.

The Black Purse
Lavar Fair – Grade 11

I think about it every year
How clueless I was, half asleep
Thinking of it as nothing but a dream
Cold air coming in and out the car window
So clueless, and half asleep
A dark blue sleeve reaching in the window.
Cold air circulating in the car
Waking me

A dark blue sleeve reaching in the window
Grabs the black purse
Waking me
All Happening too quick for me to react

Grabs the black purse,
Shocked at what I saw, a robbery
all Happening too quickly for me to react,
Frozen afterwards hoping it wasn't real
Shocked at what I saw, a robbery
Thinking of it as nothing but a dream
Frozen afterwards hoping it wasn't real
I think about it every year

Bicycle
Shahana Hussain – Grade 11

I remember this day like yesterday —
the sun glared down at me, flowers
blossoming –
but it was the best feeling ever,
the training wheels are finally off the back

The sun glaring down at me, flowers
blossoming,
at the park empty like a ghost town,
the training wheels were still off. Finally
I began to pedal, and smiled riding my
bicycle

At the park empty like a ghost town,
my dad from behind, making sure I wouldn't
fall
I began pedaling, while riding my bike
smiling,
my hands guiding which way to go

My dad was behind me, making sure I didn't
fall.
when I got the hang of it, we left happily.
my hands guided which way to go
by afternoon I was able to ride a bike

When I got the hang of it, me and my dad
left
happily. It was the best feeling ever.
By afternoon I was riding my bike.
I remember this day like yesterday.

Sweet Lullaby Full of Lies
Kennedy Rodriguez – Grade 11

Sweet lullaby, full of lies
How many people have you made cry?
You get carried by the wind, going ear to
ear—
How many broken hearts have you left by
the years?
Your pleasant song is heard by the heart
How many broken pieces have you left
behind?
Terrible conclusions are brought to the
protagonists of your stories
Why do you have to be so contradictory?
How many Romeos and Juliets have met
their demise?
Sweet love enchanting and demise grantling
Why are you so intoxicating and addicting?

Has It Ever Occurred to You
Keyla Gondres – Grade 12

Has it ever occurred to you that we can die
whenever we want?
Really, at any moment we want, we can choose
to end our life.
It is as simple as crossing the street,
or getting a paper cut.
Death is inevitable,
yet we are still afraid.
There is this unwavering will to live,
even when the last thing we want is to keep
suffering, alive.
We are parasites of the earth,
and of each other.
We feed off the Earth's love
and suck it dry
to the point where there is no love
to keep us alive.
We live off of each other's
need of stimulation
and expect unconditional affection
when no such thing really exists
and we know that there is no such thing
as unconditional love, not really.
We all have ulterior motives for everything.
We all want something in return,
even for the simplest action.
When you hug someone,
you want warmth and affection in return.
When you buy someone something,
you expect them to pay you back in some way.
To love is not to own,
but to join.
When we are in a monogamous romantic
relationship,
most of us feel as if our partner is ours;
they belong to us.
That is where love dies.
Our human nature makes even the simplest thing in
the universe complicated:
love.

You Wished You'd Helped
Luis DeVargas – Grade 12

You wished you'd helped
Not to save me, but to heal your mourning

You wish to help
But instead you wake with your head down
in the morning

You wished you'd helped
I took everything to feel numb, did
everything to feel none

You wish to help
All I needed was a friend, instead
A bullet was the closest thing to my heart

You wished you'd helped
But the roses you bought were just for my
casket in the dirt

You wish to help
But now you're the one with the rope

You wished you'd helped
So, why do I see your face… in this heavenly
place

Today, more and more, people are realizing
that they do not need to wait for death
to take them away from their misery
when they can walk straight to death
and skip the imaginary line.
There is not enough love being shared today.
Why must I wait
for the inevitable death
here, alive, suffering?