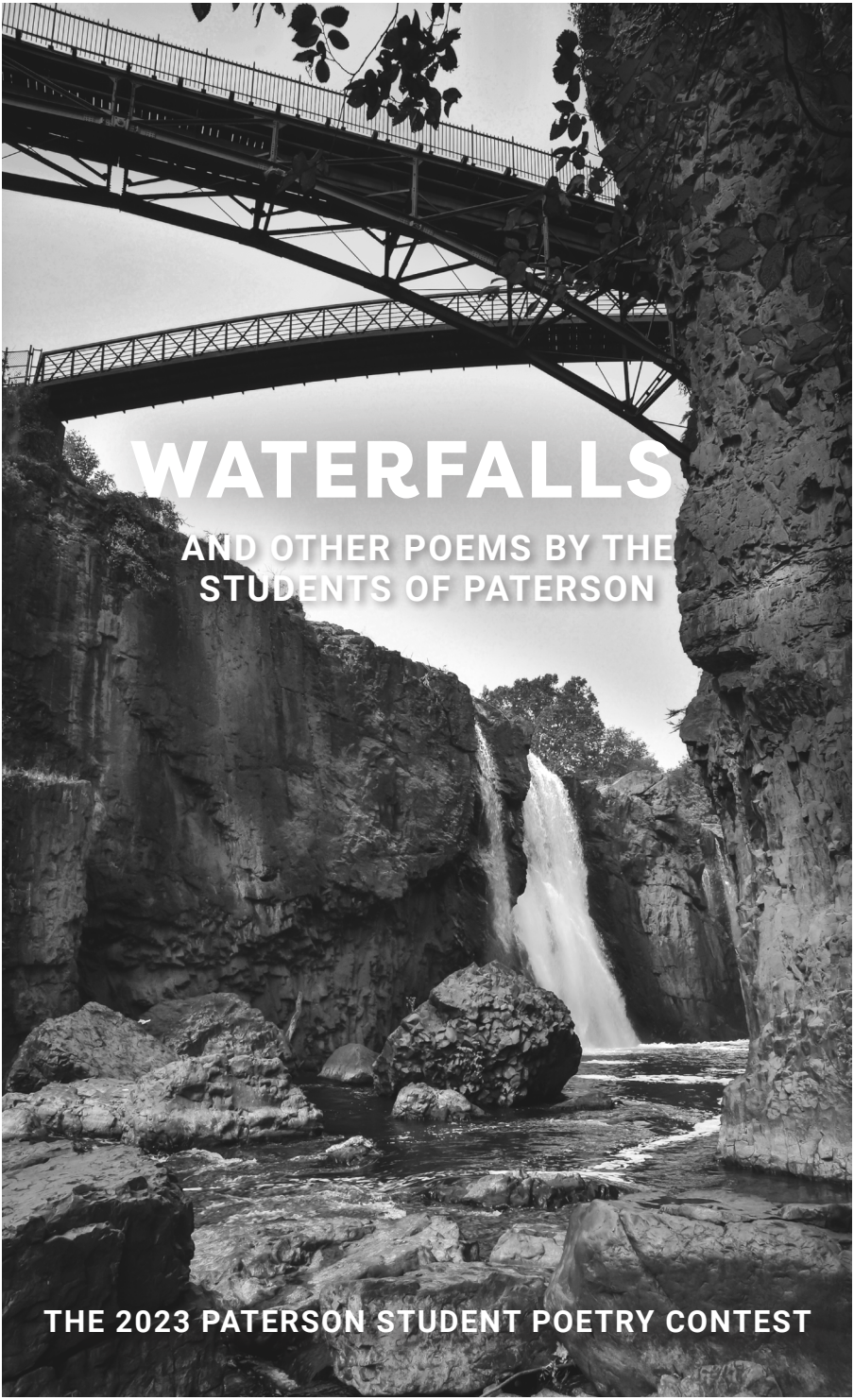
WATERFALLS
AND OTHER POEMS BY THE STUDENTS OF PATERSON
THE 2023 PATERSON STUDENT POETRY CONTEST

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AND OTHER POEMS BY THE STUDENTS OF PATERSON

THE 2023 PATERSON
STUDENT POETRY CONTEST

Edited by: Lisa Coll Nicolaou, Theater and Poetry Project Coordinator
Contest Judge: Lisa Coll Nicolaou & Maria Mazziotti Gillan, Founder & Executive Director of the Poetry Center

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The Theater and Poetry Project at Passaic County Community College is a Language Arts enrichment partnership with the Paterson Public Schools and The Poetry Center at PCCC.

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Editor's Note

Winners and honorable mention recipients of the 2023 Poetry Contest for Paterson Students can be found on the pages of this anthology, which was coordinated by the Theater and Poetry Project (TAPP) at Passaic County Community College (PCCC). TAPP is a Language Arts enrichment partnership with the Paterson Public Schools and The Poetry Center at PCCC.

We would like to express our gratitude to Superintendent Eileen Shafer and Deputy Superintendent Susana Perón of the Paterson Public Schools, as well as Dr. Steven Rose, President of Passaic County Community College, whose continuous support makes projects like this anthology possible. We would also like to thank the principals and teachers who welcomed our poets into their classrooms.

These workshops supplemented the Language Arts curriculum with free arts instruction taught by professional poets, and inspired and empowered students to tell their stories in new and creative ways.

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Renaissance One School of Humanities

School #2

Norman S. Weir

School #9

School #28 Paterson Academy for the Gifted & Talented

East Side High School

International High School

John F. Kennedy High School

Panther Academy

STEAM High School

FIRST PRIZE WINNERS

August Asiedu
Mia Pierre-Louis
Jacqueline Wilkins
Melisse Fernandez
Savannah Gonzalez
Jaila Robinson
Mikayla Moody
Rahma El Agamy
Ja'Shante Evans
Elya Hermaid
Ryan Joseph

August Asiedu
Norman S. Weir
Grade 1
Mrs. Mathews

My Sister and Me

My sister reminds me
of sunny days and rainbows.
She is colorful and talented.
We spend special times together.
My sister shares her things with me.
She's always in my heart.

My sister is an artist
who teaches me how to do my art.
She shows me patterns and colors
in everything we draw.
She and I create each day
in a very special way.
My sister is my family
who shows me her love
from far away.

Her pictures keep her close to me
when she is far away.
She is someone that I can't wait to see
when she gets home to me!

Mia Pierre-Louis
Norman S. Weir
Grade 1
Mrs. Mathews

Baking Up My Dream

Take one smart person (me).
Add in four years of college
and heaps of studying.
Bake in a warm and loving place
until college graduation.
Add one teacher swipe pass
on a necklace.
My recipe is on the way.

Measure out my teacher role.
Add a room full
of colorful decorations.
Splash in great words.
Measure out children's supplies
so all can be equal in learning!
Cook up centers with
sight words.
Stir in reading and
math challenges.
Mix in a class of
twenty students.
Bake until my lessons
are well done.
I am on my way!

For the topping of extra
success, mix in lots of humor
and big laughs.
Be patient and understanding.
Sometimes children have
trouble learning.
Sometimes my students will
be late turning in their work.
Sometimes they don't
show respect.
Fold in kindness and patience,
I am almost there.

Blend together all of
the ingredients.
What will I see?
What will I be?

When I'm cooked, I will
become the best first grade
teacher the world will ever see!
A yummy recipe for my dream!

Jacqueline Wilkins
Norman S. Weir
Grade 2
Mr. Masefield

Rocking Chair

My grandmother once gave me a little pink rocking chair.

I miss that rocking chair.

I used to place it next to my mom's big white rocking chair
and we would watch the cooking channel.

I miss that rocking chair.

I used to bring it into the kitchen and watch my mom cook or bake
and ask a lot of questions about what she was doing,
and why she was doing it.

I miss that rocking chair.

I used to sit it next to my dad's big, lazy boy and play on my table
while he watched sports on television and we would share fruit snacks.

I miss that rocking chair.

I used to fit in the little pink rocking chair.
I'm older and bigger now, it's time to pass it down to my little cousin.

I know she will make great happy memories with the rocking chair,
as I did.

I'll miss you, rocking chair.

Melisse Fernandez
Norman S. Weir
Grade 3
Mrs. Ojeda

Recipe for the Future

I think of my future, what can it be?
I think I can make a great recipe.
What ingredients can I use?
I'll use things that I love.
Stir in some kindness and
good memories for good luck.
I'll start with my education,
going above and beyond.
I'll mix in some free time
so I can have fun.

I think of my future, what can it be?
Maybe a doctor or a teacher,
or a famous scientist, we shall see.
I'll blend in some hard work
and a lot of positivity.
I'll never give up and I'll work very hard.
I know if I mix this, I'll go very far.

My future is filled with beautiful things.
My family, my friends mean the most to me.
Mix in some equality,
that's my future recipe.

Savannah Gonzalez
School #28
Grade 3
Mrs. Sarno

Who Am I?

I am Savannah.
I am a writer,
chocolate lover, editor.
Quiet as a cave in the midnight,
playful as a dog,
word farmer,
sentence builder,
word swimmer,
I am a poet.

Jaila Robinson
Norman S. Weir
Grade 3
Mrs. Ojeda

Little Brown Dancer

At 6 p.m., she joins her peers in the large room
outlined by mirrors.

The music starts. She only sees herself.
Her reflection couldn't be clearer.

This is her safe place. Her heart is happy
and her soul feels at home. She stretches.

Her thick brown legs with her head to her
toes and her curly hair that hasn't been combed.

This is where she's most confident
and nobody's opinion even matters.
Spinning and twirling, shaking her hips,
she glances at herself - she's flattered.

School is sometimes stressful.
Math can be complicated and
she doesn't always know the answer.
But after school this is a whole different world.
She's known as the beautiful little brown dancer.

Mikayla Moody
Norman S. Weir
Grade 4
Ms. Tookmanian

Waterfalls

Every time I see a waterfall,
it reminds me of a million tiny
dancing raindrops falling to the ground.
They are so beautiful, it is like they are dancing.
I pause and remember – a wise man once told me
the most powerful waterfall is the human tear drop.
So peaceful and tranquil, so graceful and free,
they flow down to the river banks almost silently.
I enjoy the sounds of the waterfall,
music to my ears, like the melody of an opera
on the radio in the morning.

Waterfalls have a beautiful color, crystal clear
like a blue sky. When I see a waterfall up close,
I can see my hands and fingers through the water.
I can see what is behind it and what is in front of it.

The love in our hearts is like a waterfall
hidden inside our bodies.
You experience that feeling of dancing.
Inside it flows like music as your body dances freely.

When I look at a waterfall, I imagine water flowing
down from heaven and beautiful angels
dancing in the sky,
touching our hearts and souls.

Rahma El Agamy
School #28
Grade 6
Mr. Taglieri

Egypt is Me

Who am I here?
What is this place?
Where am I?
Not the place I call home,
my home appears in me.
My home is a place in me,
Egypt is me.
My skin is the beautiful sand,
the desert that hides so much
to be discovered.
Egypt is me,
mysterious and full of history.
A bit like me,
Egypt is me.
My eyes are the beautiful
brown fertile soil.
The green plants thriving
in this soil,
creating a mystifying color mix.
Egypt is me,
standing tall like date trees –
growing, providing
luscious mouthwatering and
delectable treats for many.
Egypt is me,
the beautiful, shining, crystal
blue Nile running through
my blood.
Egypt is me,
a place full of memories,
protected by nature,
full of people who love it
and call it home.
Home to millions and an
ancient civilization
where great kings stood.
A place I wish to be,
Egypt is me.

Lisangel Nunez
East Side High School
Grade 9
Mr. Decker

I Miss

I miss your beautiful beaches,
your clear blue waters,
my hair flipping in the breeze,
the way the sun hits my face
and light reflects upon
the water.

I miss your dark
green mountains,
your beautiful animals,
the way the birds call my name
as they sing in the morning.

I miss the heat against
my skin and laughter that
brightens my face,
my family by the green trees
and light blue river waters,
the wind in my hair,
the mesmerizing sunsets,
the palm trees that dance
with the wind.

I miss it all.
I miss my home.
I miss the music as it's
played on the streets.
A rhythm that makes me
move my hips.
The music, the dancing,
this is home to me.
I miss the warm and
heartfelt food,
crusty empanadas with
a soft cheese filling
and fresh melon juice that's
gathered from trees.
The smells, the way they
call out to me,
water my mouth
and warm my heart.

Ja'Shante Evans
P-Tech
Grade 11
Ms. Pazant

My Great Virtuosity

For me, dark places
often produce
my brightest ideas.
My words flow off my pen
just as water flows
out of a glass.
Maybe it's a way that my mind
tells me to keep busy.
All I know is every time
I pick up a notebook,
I feel completely
and utterly at peace.
Like my heart is at the beach,
watching a sunset.
It almost feels like a dream,
so warm and so happy.

I wish it could last forever
but it never does.
Before I know it,
I'm pouring back
into reality like oil paint sliding
down a canvas,
having to deal with
all these harsh actualities
I face in reality.

I wish I could stay
in this abstract world.
Oh how I'd love that.
Maybe here my
expressionism would be
heard and appreciated by
other artists.
I truly believe that
writing is art,
an assemblage of my own.
One that I am proud
to call mine –
my great virtuosity.

Elya Hemaid
John F. Kennedy High School
Grade 11
Ms. Almeida

The Rain

If you wanna lay in the rain together,
I wouldn't mind.
I like the feeling of rain hitting me,
its soft voice distracting me from overthinking.
I feel like I belong in the quiet.
I wish I could live within the silence of the rain.

Ryan Joseph
STEAM Academy
Grade 12
Mrs. Spiliotopoulos

Meursault and Me

(After reading *The Stranger* by Albert Camus, the poem is a compare and contrast study between the absurdist, existentialist character of *Meursault and Me*.)

Meursault is hungry. He complains about it or he goes out and buys food.

I love spaghetti. When I eat
spaghetti, it fills me up.
At the end of it all, it leaves
a smile on my face.
When I eat spaghetti, it
reminds me of when
I ate it as a kid.

Meursault hates the heat. It gives him physical discomfort.

It's hot outside. I find
somewhere to sit where
it's cool.
After sitting down for a while,
I get me a cold cup of water.
If I can't cool down right away,
I just wait, that's all.

Meursault finds out about his mother. She died. He has a I-guess-I-should-go-see-her-reaction.

When my grandmother
passed away,
I was very sad.
She gave me a different
world view.
When I think of her,
I feel both happy and sad.

Meursault killed a man. He doesn't care.

When I was ten, I told
someone they were ugly.
I felt so bad afterward.
I regretted it because I knew
I had done something wrong.

SECOND PRIZE WINNERS

Ja'Niyah Briggs
Messiah Shabazz
Nia Goodwin
Amaya Jones
Lia Perez
Sophia Sayegh
Tennile Morgan
Haley Dunnel
Jeriel Polanco Sanchez
Yoselyn Medina
Anyla Singletary
Arianna Perez
Michelle Fabian
Taslima Rimi
Jhy'Deisha Stewart
T'Ziah Webb

Ja'Niyah Briggs
Norman S. Weir
Grade 2
Mr. Masefield

My Uncle

Uncle Nas - as nice as Mr. Claus.
His loss made us all soft.

We cried our eyes dry,
and let out a real loud sigh.

Uncle Nas - we miss you dearly.
I really wish you were near me.

I know you can hear me.
Uncle Nas - we miss you sincerely!

Messiah Shabazz
Norman S. Weir
Grade 2
Mr. Masefield

I Wish

I wish money grew on trees
so everyone could see,
see how great life could be.

I wish everyone had a place to live
and clothes to wear, eyes to see
and ears that hear.

I wish everyone had food. Food to grow,
food to eat, food for thought, hmmm…

I wish I could have more fun times with my cousins.
I wish people didn't get sick –
sick and even die.

I wish my family and I were on vacation
seeing the world God made for us.

I wish everyone was treated kindly.
With LOVE, RESPECT and NO HATE!

Then, maybe the world would be something
we all would appreciate.

I wish, I wish, I wish
all my wishes would come true!

Nia Goodwin
Norman S. Weir
Grade 3
Ms. Ojeda

My Curly Kinky Hair

It sits on my head.
It's kinky and curly.
When I need to get it done some days,
I get up really early.
I can wear it in all different ways,
I can keep the same style for days.
Sometimes it gets in my face,
and when it's windy it gets all over the place.
I like it in braids and twists,
I like it in puffs and straight.
No matter how I wear it,
all the styles are great.
My family always helps me,
they teach me to take good care of my hair.
I want to keep it healthy
because I love my hair!

Amaya Jones
Norman S. Weir
Grade 3
Ms. Ojeda

Grandpa and Me

My grandpa was one of the best,
and he loved me so much.
I miss his laugh and his tender touch.

My grandpa used to make my days happy and bright.
Now that he's gone,
I miss those nights.
His smile was big, and his laugh was funny,
I miss the times when he used to sneak me money.

The day he left I cried so much.
I miss his voice very much.
I know he's in heaven
smiling down, cheering me on
as I make him proud.
He's with my grandma whom I miss as well,
so I know this is not a final farewell.

Grandpa, just know that you were loved by me,
your favorite granddaughter I will forever be.
Come see me in my dreams and tell me you are alright,
and don't forget to kiss me good night.

Lia Perez
School #28
Grade 3
Mrs. Sarno

All About Me

I am Lia Sarai Perez,
a cake baker,
a cat that purrs,
a phrase maker.
I am as gentle as a teddy bear
and as sweet as a cherry,
and I get along with others
as peanut butter and jelly.

Also, I am kind.
I am unique.
I am brave.
I am daring.
I am fearless.
I am strong.
I am caring.
I am courageous.
I am amazing.
I am loved.
I am a POET.

Sophia Sayegh
School #28
Grade 4
Ms. Dias

New York

It seems magical, yet so real.
People from far and near.
The tall, tall buildings with
their spires up high
or the smell of a
food truck nearby.
The cars in the busy,
busy street,
with buses that are neat.
You can hear people talking,
or a pigeon walking.
The bustling sidewalks
with their gleaming lights.
The burgers at a McDonald's
to the coffee at Starbucks.
The fancy apartments
with brown bricks,
or the sound of a subway
way down below.
The Broadway actors with
their sparkling costumes.
The Freedom Tower in honor
of the Twins.
Or the Empire State Building
with its many floors
that are slim.
At night, all of the gleaming,
bright, bright lights.
One more thing that makes
New York magical is that
everyone has stories to tell,
from far to near
or near to far.

New York brings us together,
as one,
one as all.

Tennile Morgan
Renaissance School One
Grade 5
Mrs. Kim

My Teacher

I was lost and not at home.
They called me a “bad kid.”
I was nothing.
It took a while to realize
I was something.

Nobody stopped me,
so being a bad kid was easy to be
until I met my teacher.

She helped, cared for and bonded with me.
I loved her in my own way.
She made me come to school everyday.
I liked learning.
She was kind and nice.

I look back now that I’m older,
I cherish people over and over.

Haley Dunnel
School #28
Grade 6
Mr. Taglieri

Lost in My Own Thoughts

Lost:
Like when you move to
a new place
and you don't know
anything or anyone.
Do I belong?
A question I constantly
ask myself,
but there is no one
to help me answer it.

Lost:
When you're on vacation
in a foreign country,
but you don't know how to
speak the native language.
Is there anyone that can
tell me how?
I tell myself time after time.
No one can hear my voice,
my little cries for help.

Lost:
When you open a new
door in your life,
with two paths but you don't
know which one to take.
Where are the arrows that are
supposed to guide me?
A question that circles through
my mind everyday.
But there is no one to stop this
never-ending cycle.

Lost:
Or maybe I've found my way.
Maybe there was someone to
answer my question,
someone to tell me how
and wipe my tears.
Someone to guide me through it,
to stop the never-ending cycle.

Lost:
Maybe it was me,
maybe I am the person to wipe
my own tears.
Or am I the person that was
supposed to lead the way?
But what if I keep getting lost?

Jeriel Polanco Sanchez
School #28
Grade 6
Mr. Taglieri

Just Breathe

"Just breathe," the poster said.
Easy for you to say,
do you have a life?
How about a job?
I bet you don't, you're a poster!
Why should I listen to a random poster?
I'm so mad at this poster!
Stop assuming my problems
are just so easy to solve!

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT I GO THROUGH, OK?!
JUST BREATHE?!
Just breathe?!
Just…just…
I…I feel better.

Maybe you were right,
you random motivational poster
plastered on the wall.

Maybe I should "just breathe."

Yoselyn Medina
School #2
Grade 7
Ms. Andretta

Me and the Moon

I'm such a moon person.

Any phase the moon is in,
I am so excited!
The moon is sometimes
the only thing I trust.
If you feel lonely, don't worry,
the moon is lonely too.

The moon taught me.

It's okay to go through phases.
The moon knows me
more than anyone on this planet.
The moon sees through your soul.
and like the moon,
we must go through phases
of emptiness, anger and stress
to feel full again.

Just me.

Me and the moon.

Anyla Singletary
School #2
Grade 7
Ms. Andretta

Thinking

Thinking of a poet,
worrying I won't be able to brainstorm any ideas.
Put me in Maya Angelou's shoes,
what would she do?
Not one idea in my head,
but the idea of being afraid.
My head is spinning, spinning and spinning,
like the wheels on the bike.
Lying around and thinking,
what should I do?
Starting to feel like the broken branches on trees.
Questioning myself,
am I capable of this?
Am I smart enough for this?
Thinking again,
what would Maya Angelou do?
Put me in her shoes.
Beginning to fall like leaves on trees,
not one idea in my head,
only the idea of being afraid,
and I'm still thinking of a poet.

Arianna Perez
East Side High School
Grade 9
Mr. Decker

If I Were a Jellyfish

If I were a jellyfish,
I would move with the ocean's current.
If I were a jellyfish,
I would illuminate all the darkness around me.
A jellyfish with no brain or thoughts.
A jellyfish with no awareness of what lies beyond it.
If I were a jellyfish,
I would move in sync with the universe.
If I were a jellyfish,
I would be free from all the things
that chain me down.
A jellyfish has no worries.
A jellyfish has no emotions.

If I were a jellyfish, I would feel the world
move around me slowly.

Michelle Fabian
International High School
Grade 11
Ms. Briggs

A Tribute to Madeleine McCann

Alone in the margin
of the pool with no
guardian in sight.
She was only three.

Photographers with big
cameras point and shoot
towards her.
She was only three.

The glare in her green
eyes with a distinctive
brown stripe.
Lit up with a happy
countenance, like a kid
in a candy store.
She was only three.

The cameras read her eyes
as if it was the last picture
she ever took.
She was only three.

Her parents were completely
oblivious in the restaurant,
As they chuckled with
their peers.
She was only three.

At night she snuggles in
her father's arms
as he takes her to repose with
her twin brothers.
She was only three.

Alone with her two brothers she
slept through the night
with no guardian in sight.
She was only three.

The balcony door was unlocked.
She was only three.

As the mother checks on the
children, the doors slams
behind her as the breeze from
the balcony haunts the room.
There were only two.

Madeleine was gone without
a trace, and no one knows
where she is,
or with whom she left.
She was only three.

Taslima Rimi
John F. Kennedy High School
Grade 11
Mr. Almeida

Empty

Today my heart feels empty.
Though I have a lot of acquaintances,
there are no sympathizers.
I went to the terrace to talk to the stars,
thought I could tell them about my pain,
but sadly even the sky is empty today.

My heart felt empty because there
was nobody to show sympathy.
When one of my closest friends
made me feel betrayed,
there was nobody to comfort me.

All I was looking for was to talk
to somebody,
but I ended up finding nobody.

Jhy'Deisha Stewart
P-Tech
Grade 11
Ms. Pazant

Rain Drops

Sitting at the window as I listen
to the rain drops tap dance
against the glass.

Lightning flash I see an image
of yesterday's past.

Reflecting on all the bad times
I had to get past,
so glad those times
didn't last.
Living life slow and steady,
and yet, it feels like I'm
moving fast.

These rain drops were once equal
to my tear drops on the days
I felt sad.
So much pain I held back,
had to tell myself not to crack.

Instead, I've welcomed the storm
to my front door
with a welcoming doormat,
allowing the sunshine to follow
after with smiles and laughter.

T'Ziah Webb
P-Tech
Grade 12
Ms. Pazant

Lost

Unable to find
something physically
or mentally –
that's my take on the
definition of lost.
I've always felt like
I was never able
to find myself.
In my eyes, I am lost.
I don't see myself
when I look in the mirror,
but in everyone else's eyes,
I'm the happiest person
they've ever seen.
Other people started trends
while I started to lose myself.
Feeling lost is something
I've always felt,
but this time I started to melt.
With these feelings I've never
had, I started to crystallized
into pieces of a
different person.
I felt so lost, I started to act
like the color of car exhaust.
Dark. I've never been a person
who was always happy,
but I was never sad either.
As time passed, I started
to think about things
I had never thought about.
As Michael J. Woodard said –
I just wanted someone
to "wash the hurt away
from me."
In the end, I just want to
be the happy me
that others see
when they look at me.

HONORABLE MENTION WINNERS

Mostafa Elagamy
Jayalise Garcia
Chase Miller
Zainab Elfrid
Parvina Haslani
Abdelmoujib Azennag
Hoda Elbakly
Sumaya Rodriguez
Lizmari Vasquez
Lovely Shefa York
Vlanny Tavarez
Jenna O'Connor

Mostafa Elagamy
School #28
Grade 2
Mrs. Taylor

Legos

My Legos call to me,
“pick me, pick me!”
They want to be a part
of the Lego construction.
They feel happy when they are
put with their friend brick.
They don’t mind being on the top or bottom.
My Legos call to me.

Jayalise Garcia
Norman S. Weir
Grade 2
Mr. Masefield

Proud of Myself

Remember the first day of school,
in first grade.

I felt lost and confused.
I thought I would not learn,
not make friends.

Remember how I cried
not knowing anything,
because kindergarten was online –
because of Covid.

Remember that my grandmother
told me that I would do great!
I will not be lost.
Because now I am in the second grade.
Now I am proud of myself,
because I remember what I learned!

Remember that I am an honor roll
student and I am proud of myself.

Chase Miller
Norman S. Weir
Grade 2
Mr. Masefield

My Home is Where My Heart Is

Home to me is the smell
of flavorful food that fills
up my nostrils.

Home to me is the hugs
I receive from each of my family members
when they see me.

Home to me is hearing shouts
from my uncles as they yell
at the television, watching
their favorite teams play.

Home to me is enjoying time
hanging out with my cousins
while I jump and play around.

Home to me is laughter that rings
my ears while everyone enjoys
each other's presence.

Home to me is not just an ordinary place.
Home to me is love.

Zainab Elfrid
School #28
Grade 3
Mrs. Sarno

About Friendship

About Kayleen, My Best Friend in the World

You are my best friend,
you belong in my heart.
We go through ups and downs
but still nothing can tear us apart.
Best friends stick together till the end.
They are like a straight line
that will not bend.
When she needs help,
I tell her to believe in herself first
and then go through it
with your best friend.
I have a lot of love
for my friend.
I hope we will stick together
until the end.

Parvina Haslani
School #28
Grade 4
Ms. Dias

The Ocean and Me

As I stand by
the ocean,
the sand comes to me.
I am like the waves,
so fierce and brave
not afraid.

They say that you can't,
but I say you can.
If you go too deep, you die.
I go too deep, I don't.
I am the sea.

The ocean sand surrounds me
whispering my name.
Too salty,
but not me.

The breeze blows my hair.
So free to be
near the sea.

So beautiful.
The waves crash,
but something beneath
all the seawater.

I was born in the sea,
raised in the sea,
and ready to be
the ocean
and me.

Abdelmoujib Azennag
School #28
Grade 5
Ms. Dias

Lost in Time

I sit in the rocking chair next to the fire,
I can hear the fire's loud crackling roars.
I open my book and start a poem.

Then I hear the clock chime.
I say just one more page.
I try to think of a rhyme.

As I think of a rhyme,
nothing combines.
I fall down a hole.
I am lost in time.

I am in space.
Everything around me is spinning
at an alarming rate.
I hear the clock chime.

I am awake.
Everything around me looks older.
I experience so much change.

I hear the rain outside,
I look at my book.
I say one more page.
I am lost in time.

Hoda Elbakly
School #9
Grade 5
Mrs. Fodi

A Recipe to Make My Cousin

Add a dash of kindness to
make the recipe sweet.
Mix in five cups of humor
to give you a laugh.
Stir in a tablespoon
of weirdness into the mix
so the recipe is unique.
Then, you have my cousin
and my best friend, Amira.

Sumaya Rodriguez
School #9
Grade 5
Mrs. Fodi

You Can Do Anything

Put your mind to it.
You can do it.
Play basketball.
Climb a mountain.
Even if you fall,
get back up and try again.
Bake a cake for the first time.
Or write a poem
and try to rhyme.
Go to the lake and jump in.
Don't be scared, we're all here to win.
You can do anything!

Lizmari Vasquez
School #9
Grade 5
Mrs. Fodi

Black and Brown Matter

Black and Brown shoes.
Black and Brown dress.
Black and Brown shirt.
Black and Brown pants.
Black and Brown floor.
Black and Brown door.
Black and Brown hair.
Black and Brown people.

Do you know what it's like
to go outside knowing
people are scared of you?

Maybe you do,
maybe you don't.

Just DON'T treat
Black and Brown lives differently.

Just because you THINK
you are better.
Black and Brown
is not bad or scary.
It's beautiful and unique.

Lovely Shefa York
Renaissance School One
Grade 5
Mrs. Kim

I Am A Young Woman

I am a young woman.
I am beautiful,
I am fearless,
I am divine.
I am kind.
You don't have to like me,
it's fine.
So what if you think
bad about me?
But some women do care.
Please, oh please, don't stare.
It doesn't matter to me,
I am not she,
I am me.
There's nobody else
I'd rather be.

Vlanny Tavarez
School #28
Grade 6
Mr. Taglieri

Rain

They say days that rain
make people sad and gloomy,
but not for me.
Days that rain make me feel
happy and cheerful.
Something about the rain
feels welcoming.
Welcoming like a home,
a home I never had.

Jenna O'Connor
STEAM
Grade 9
Mr. Campbell

Today's Norm

A handgun?
All to be safe.
What you see everyday
on the news,
the violence this society
is getting into.
As we leave our house,
it becomes a battle
of survival.
In silence we are questioning
the chances if they will come
back home, or if that will be
the last time I see them.
The chances in which we just
keep advances.
Stay in your classes, they said,
put your head down
and lock the door.
6 to 19,
those are our chances.
For some of us at least,
this is not the end.