

2007 POETRY AWARD WINNERS

I AM?

I am trying not to be what I think I am
hiding every day from people, not thinking I'm a man.
I am probably a superstar inside, trying t hide
from paparazzi who try to make who I am.
I guess I'm just paranoid because people pass me by
staring like I'm not there and thinking I'm not nice.

Come to think of it, who says I can't make myself out to be
who I want everyone to be, just like me?
I am the person who is transparent, stuck in a verse like this
trying to be everyone else.
Well, if that's true, I try too hard
to be a carved monkey in that monkey suit.
If that's true, I am the moon, full of no emotions
looking at the one guy everyone and me tries to be.

I am trying to hide, trying to hide with everyone
and I'm dressed and hidden into what you're doing
and what's new, hey, but if life was the same
who would be the leader, tough guy everyone follows
in the fast cars, superstars,
and his kid who is going to be just like him
not because he's good, but because he's cool in school
and all the kids he knows are just like him.
I am exactly who that guy is, or him, or her,
Just like you.

Luqman Abdullah, Grade 8
Hart Middle School

THE SKY

The blue sky at daytime,
Full of wondrous white clouds,
Which are like a million eyes,
Peeking down on you.

The dark black sky at nighttime,
Is full of sparkling stars.
The stars are windows from heaven,
With your ancestors peeking through
The windows,
Watching you.

Ivette Magana, Grade 6
Horace Mann Elementary School

CHINESE MARCHING SOLDIERS

Soldiers marching on and on.

In the heat they go on.

These Chinese soldiers,

With their wooden guns,

Have hope to become real ones.

Ashby McCoy, Grade 6
Lowell School

THE PEACE MAKER

As I wished for a better place,
it never came true.
Golden gates, crystal rivers,
ponds, pools, and seas
horses and ponies galloping around
as if they were busses or trains
a glorious sky to look up upon
hunting down flowers in a fresh garden
with posies, daisies, tulips, daffodils,
dandelions, and sunflowers.
Peace, no guns.
Staying alive, no knives.
No killing, no prisons.
Longest labors, shorter death.
Heroic mist coming to make my dreams come true---
Suddenly it's time to awake,
and as you walk outside, it's just how you dreamed of it.

Shamia House, Grade 8
Hart Middle School

THE MOON

I am your cold nighttime friend
in the sky
I whisper to you when you're sleeping
I sing Italian love songs
In the summer I tiptoe through the stars
In the winter I rumble across the sky
When you were little, I let you juggle me
with the stars
I look and taste like creamy white milk
chocolate
But I feel like a bumpy rock
I am the moon

Hannah L. Kramer, Grade 6
Parkmont School

THE LIGHT OF NATURE

Red hearts unfold like flowers
before they open to the sun above
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
drive the dark of doubt away
Giver of immortal gladness,
fill me with the light of day
Overflowing my everlasting laughter,
my shadow changes around me
My existing soul suffering
the sunset goes down on me.

Antonio Spencer, Grade 7
Hart Middle School

REVOLUTION

Every one knows, but nobody cares.
Out of the darkness, a million sins.

One single drop glistens.
One single child grins.

Not enough to just hope.
So a revolution begins.

Julie Finelli, Grade 6
Horace Mann Elementary School

A SUMMER SKY

i step outside into the night
i hear my foot hit the ground
And then the air without a sound
Wraps me up and twirls me-
 round
then I run across the lawn
and leap
and dance
and then I look up
and glance-
 at the summer sky

Rachel F. Chason, Grade 6
Horace Mann Elementary School

WOODEN HEART

His heart is so wooden, it burns in the flames,
The afternoon has hit and it's harder than the rain.
Tumble down upon me like bricks,
Wooden hurts like this splinter I can't forget.

Quanika Jackson, Grade 7
Hart Middle School

I AM FROM. . .

I am from Jequie Park
Where footballs soar and soccer cleats rip the dirt
Where baseball bats crack and whoosh.
And "Daddy Monster" chases us all over the place.

I am from Fort Stevens
Where my brother and I relive
The battles fought in 1864
When bullets whizzed past Lincoln's head
The open-mouthed cannons are like iron turtles on whose backs we ride.

I am from vacations with family Rehoboth and the Outer Banks where the
waves batter against my chest
Camping and s'mores, gooey marshmallow grows a sticky white beard on
my chin
Texas heat with swimming pools and hard dry dirt playgrounds
And Vermont cold, sledding down Turkey Hill at Maison Killaha
I am from Carru, Chateau Rafette, and Glenflsk in County Kerry
Italy, France and Ireland.

I am from BBQ chicken and Friday night dinners out
Turkey burgers and turkey cutlets
Mashed potatoes and fresh white peaches from our tree
Bouche de Noel and seven kinds of fish on Christmas Eve.

I am from Grandpa's *Ritorna a Sorrento*
And Bonne Maman's *Il etait un petit navire*
I am from doo-hickeys, scubbledy guts and pickled farts
And "Another day in which to excel."
I am from "Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love
commits me..."
To human rights.

I am from hues of Donahues and masses of Massiminos
From Bonadios and de Vitrys and Fornataros and de Ila Blanchetais
I am from lawyers and stone cutters and newspaper men
I am from coal miners and peasants and royalty.
I am from ten Italian sisters – Julia, Genesa, Threse, Delia, Caroline, Pricella
and Mamie. And three who died as babies.

I am from olive oil and olive colored skin
Dark eyes and thick brown hair.
I am from strength and beauty.
I am my mother's son.

Conor Donahue, Grade 7
Parkmont School

TRUST

Living so close
They accept each other
Without fear or anger
They take one another in
They let one another bloom and grow
Then they let them fall back to rest
They trust each other
They have to
They hold each other up
Through whatever conditions come at them
And only a breeze can make them fall to the ground

Julia Berard, Grade 6
Horace Mann Elementary School

MY LIFE

My life as a child is like a hurricane
blowing a strong wind over the clouds.

It's a man that cried for forgiveness
when he stole something.

My life is like a velvet rose
getting ready to be put in water.

My life is like my memory
climbing a staircase to my future.

Raymond Reynolds, Grade 7
Hart Middle School

THE GUITARIST

Look down into his empty mug

He plays

And plays

And plays all day

Waiting for a nickel's voice to sing along with him.

Paula Maseda, Grade 6
Horace Mann Elementary School

MONAE'S DAY

Crescent moon
Shining down
On the Anacostia River

Report card
Being naughty
But flowing like ocean waves

Suspension
From the freedom
While being on that
Rugged old plantation

Fingertips
Grow like trees
Mind gleaming like the sun

Monday
Classroom's lily blooms
And blossoms like
Children and flowers.

Monae Smith, grade 8
Hart Middle School

RED PANDA

A grove of bamboo
In an exhibit
At the zoo.
Looks empty,
But look again.

Movement
In the plants.
A small patch
Of red russet fur
Appears.

A red panda
Peeks around
The bamboo stalks.
Black nose twitching,
Tan ears pricked.

He steps into the open,
Watching for
Possible predators.
His eyes dart,
And fall on you.

They are dark,
Set in a white and tan face.
Eyes that look melancholy,
Like he would rather be
Somewhere else.

continued--

He stares,
Then looks away,
And trots back into the bamboo.
But in his eyes,
You can see he is a prisoner.

A captive
In the exhibit,
With the bamboo grove,
Lush and green
At the zoo.

He wants to go home.

Amanda Meltsner, Grade 6
Lowell School

THE RIVER

The river winds its way across the land
The river splashes over the rocks
And you can hear the swirling over the
Water as it winds its way across the land

The river is like a hand reaching to the ocean stopping
at nothing
Running past the rich, mahogany dirt
And lofty, sheltering trees,
Their branches hanging over the river
With the light green leaves fluttering in the wind.
The light dances on the river and ground
showing breathtaking sights
The river is like a hand reaching out to the ocean
stopping at nothing

Alex Spigler, Grade 6
Horace Mann Elementary School

NEVER SHALL I FORGET

Never shall I forget my grandmother's closed eyes
Her death will scar me forever
And never again will I hear her say
listen and wait
All the faces at her burial ground
and I can see into their hearts

Never shall I forget her empty room
once full of life
But now it's a gray haze, blue-black broken glass
I step into the room and start to cry
I not only cry, but I cry the sun's tears
The clouds of memories, pain, and departed doubt.

Never shall I forget the emptiness of my heart
the farewell of her body as it lay there in the casket
I'm spoiled rotten by her
I still cry from time to time

I'm struggling to have a good life
but I'm weeping with hollow heartbreaks
and the one thing I remember the most is these words,
"From ashes to ashes, dust to dust."
You may now commence her body into the grave

Something that was once alive is departed
to a place where she deserved a good rest
I will always reminisce on the memories of my grandmother
Farewell grandma, and you will truly be missed.
I love you.

Jasmine Murray, Grade 8
Hart Middle School

DANCING THROUGH THE RAIN

Dancing through the rain
Smiling and singing
Bare feet plattering on mud
Singing a tune that has never been heard
My song
The song of me and my life
And the song of the world
And the song of you and the song of beauty and friendship
and love Trust
and pureness mixed together in a twisting melody
Twisting and dancing
Sliding and gliding
So simple and so magical
Dancing in the rain.

Camille Kellogg, Grade 6
National Cathedral School

UNFINISHED BUSINESS AS A CHILD

My life as a child was like
a palace crumbling.
My schoolwork was majestic.
My social life was a hurricane.
My inspiration as a child was my mother,
she was my only friend.
The school year was life,
a never-ending staircase.
In my music class, my song sounded.
That was my life as a child.

Tiara Mason, Grade 7
Hart Middle School

INVISIBLE

It was invisible,
Only I could see it,
I saw it in the tree
I heard its singing voice
I felt its colorful feathers
I saw it look at me
I heard its chirp in my ear
And no one else did
Only me.

I stopped
It stopped
I thought
It thought
I walked
It walked
I sang
It sang
I fell
It helped.
For it only had goodness in it.

Sara Vicini, Grade 6
Horace Mann Elementary School

SUMMERTIME

Summer is the smell of ice cream

the sight of kids playing

the taste of barbeque

the sound of air conditioning buzzing

the feeling of three months of nothing to do

the smell of bonfires

the sight of fireworks

the taste of humidity

the sound of soccer in the park

the feeling of no productivity

Matthew Devonish, Grade 11
Parkmont School

I AM, I AM

I am the footsteps of tomorrow.

I am the legend of morning trumpets.

I am the secret, grave voyage.

I am departed caution.

I am the breath of a 2 month infant.

I am a coral forbidden backpack.

also opaque eyes.

I am the bang of a souvenir drum.

I am a decent speech of a breathless man.

I am ancient flutes during summertime.

I am... who I am... I am the woman

who stands above us, who breathes everyone's air

I am, I am Renita Williams.

Renita Williams, Grade 9
Ballou High School

ALONE

Running through the woods
Eyes always watching
Never knowing what trap
Might be set off by my next step
The fear engulfing me
I'm being crushed
Under tons of pressure
What will they think of me
Or worse what will they say
Will it be good
Or will it be bad
If only I didn't feel so alone
All I'd need is a friend
To help me through

Ryan Tarry, Grade 10
The Lab School of Washington

THE WELDER

A small, crimped man with an uneven beard,
A single narrow spectacle,
And a blowtorch sits in a cramped metal workshop,
working furiously.
“I’m a man of necessity and nothing more.”

Sparks arc off his creation,
Steam mingles with his stiff white beard reminding him
of dry ice.
His workshop reeks of rust and metal,
Deprived of Color,
Deprived of Change.
Who knew that the man who makes us could be so dull.
“I’m a man of necessity and nothing more.”

His hands blur over the figure on the table,
Always the same,
Perfectly balanced,
Same potential,
Each figure simple and unimportant,
Dropped into birth on the world he slaves over.

Part of him longs to make the figure unique, beautiful,
Different from the millions of others,
A marble among pebbles,
But conscience stands over him with a whip.
“I’m a man of necessity and nothing more.”

But he stutters and his fingers twitch and the cogs of routine
grind to a halt,
Sending shivers down his back.
His spectacle falls to the floor along with his blowtorch
Leaving him shaking alone in a loud silence.
He raises his arm in front of him to see a
scarlet bead of blood draw a line
Down his pale hand and soak into the
figure’s chest before him.

Slowly, unsteadily, the Welder begins his work again,
Building up his tempo until his hands are blurred into
a symphony of creation.
Color trickles into his once dull eyes like the shattering of liquid jewels,
And as his hands reach their peak,
Sculpting every crimp and crease of the figure's hauntingly thoughtful
face,
The Welder's eyes become emerald chandeliers as bright as inspiration.
And with a final, graceful touch, his masterpiece fades with a sorrowful
glow,
His gift to the world he slaves over.

And in the wake of the figure's passing lies a Rose,
Redder than Pain, and more persuasive than Temptation,
That the Welder reverently places in a small glass vase.

"I'm a man of necessity no more."

Ben Buchbinder, Grade 11
St. John's College High School

HIS FUTURE

He comes from bologna and government cheese sandwiches,
And juice, just juice.

He comes from corruption.
He has been blinded by the myths that promise him
dope boy status
if he is true about gettin' this money.
Senile senior hood-rich celebrities
tied the blindfold real tight, didn't they?
Ironically, he's otherwise insouciant,
until he's filling his mind
with false dreams of hood stardom.

Corrupted, thoughtful, consumed, anxious.
He thinks of his future
it's like he's reading his own palm.
And the doom that he experienced leaves him in awe.
Now he has this moment to choose:
Life, or death.

James Saunders, Grade 11
Ballou High School

SNOW

As I look out my window

Flakes as big as cotton balls

Are coming down

It covers the ground

Like a blanket of white calmness

When the sun comes out

It reflects off the white crystals

Snow absorbs all the sound

The snow collecting on the branches of trees

Allison Wheeler, Grade 10
The Lab School of Washingto

ODE TO SUNLIGHT

It rises high up in the East
With its powerful saffron blaze,
And with its perfect streams of light
It parts the clouds away.

It's the herald of the morning
A globe of vibrant rays
It's the mighty face of Apollo
Shining brightly all the day.

When the weather's hot and humid
I must retreat from its heat to the shade,
Lying sheltered under cooling branches
And call serenity to my brain.

Brother to the moon,
Bringer of the night,
The sight of the Sun is what I love
And this ode is to its light.

Vincent Alozie, Grade 10
Parkmont School

APRIL

April-
Its smooth fragrance,
Its random howl

I can hear the fascination in her tone
By the silent guitar
And the fading laughter
In the distance.

I can see the gathering
Of the crimson wings
Beating their exotic colored rhythm
The glow in their moonlit eyes
The risen dawn or
The ghostly blankness
That comforts my shadow.

I can feel the unwritten thermal
Beneath my ragged unstable skeleton
Falling under the rain
Pouring down,
Breaking my every bone.

James Tindle, Grade 9
SAIL Charter High School

THE CHANGING

My world is changing

This feeling is amazing

Swirling

Twirling

Heaven's Curling

Around my finger

Like a piece of golden thread

My world is changing

Heaven is curling

My dreams will never be the same again

Crystal Vogel, Grade 10
The Lab School of Washington

WITHOUT YOU

Without you is like being without
Earrings with my hair pinned up

Without you is like going to the beach
Without sunblock

Without you is like the ice cream without
The cone and sugar without spice

Without you is like winter without
Christmas, snow and presents

Without you is like a cookie without the
Glass of milk and

Without you is like the forest without the
Trees and trees without the leaves

Without you is not being able to touch your
Carmelo brown skin and looking into your
Light brown eyes

Without you is exactly not being able to hug
You and kiss you

Without you is exactly not being able to hear
Your deep sounding voice

Without you is exactly not being your one and
Not being the one you're with at every waking
Moment

Without you is exactly not being able to say your
Name, Will, and you saying my name, Bianca

Without you is exactly not being able to fall
Asleep on the phone together

Without you is Not being able to say or hear,
"I Love You."

I 'm so lost Without You Will

Bianca Brown, Grade 9
Parkmont School

WHO WILL CARE

Who will care
If I wake up one night and cry
Looking up to the midnight sky

Who will care
If I get ready for the morning
As I stand outside with the rain pouring

Who will care
If I join the war
Fighting for my country to even the score

Who will care
If I killed some one in the battlefield
Always protected by my shield

Who will care
If I think war is wrong
Instead of compromise which will always be strong

Who will care
If I die
Trying to help with love and pride

Sasha Luce, Grade 10
The Lab School of Washington

DESTRUCTION

I am a cup of death
Filled to the top with hatred
The anger boiling inside of me
Like a kettle of hot water
It rages like a black tornado
Destroying everything in its path
My red hot angry knife
Slices the last bit of light and love
The darkness covers everything
And chokes the life out of life itself
Red and black covers all the earth
With slaughter and murder
Destruction is my name and
That is what I am

Damon Kee, Grade 9
Ballou High School

ENJOY THE MOMENT

Everyday people walk

Up and down the street

Never do they stop to enjoy

The moment

Everyday counts

Every second counts

Whether the sun is setting

Or the birds are chirping

STOP!!

And look at the sun setting

Or

STOP!!

And listen to the birds chirping

And enjoy the moment

Francisca Augustin, Grade 11
Parkmont School

DISOWNED.COUNTY

“D.C”

I wanted to get away
I wanted to go some where
but chaos was all I could feel here.
as bad food corrupts my mouth
and the taste of the government just won't get out.
While drugs and potholes lay upon the street
I wanted to get out I wanted to be free
The corners and fights what a sight to see.
While pollution and smoke run about the air uncontrollable.
As gun shoots corrupt the minds of the young
and beggars the minds of the sane.
Having to minuet your every second
living life here is not a game.
I wanted to get out I wanted to be free
but it seems I'm stuck here in this
disowned county.

Eboneka Coleman, Grade 10
Banneker High School

A KISS

I blew a kiss,
It fluttered on the breeze,
And the wind carried it away.
It rode
On currents of air,
Over oceans that churned beneath it,
Over sleepy farm houses and snowy fields,
Through dark woods, deep and dense,
And over stables,
where restless horses stomped and snorted.
My kiss floated over cities,
Full of twinkling lights,
Like stars,
That blinked when they went out.
The kiss I blew,
It flew and flew,
Over all of this,
All the way to you.
And there it landed, on your sleeping cheek.
You didn't know
-no, you didn't know-
That the kiss flew over woods and snow,
Or even that it existed.
But there it lay,
And there it will forever stay,
On your oblivious cheek.

Becca Rothfeld, Grade 9
Georgetown Day School

JUNE

I

June—
the shine, the glory
school is out, pools are open,
kids' laughter brightens the day.
The sun is out, the cold is gone,
Whew! Those are the days.

II

The birds singing, rabbits hopping,
searching for a bite to eat;
flowers shining bright, flowing
to the rhythm of the beat.
Forgotten the time, forgotten the way
June is so good, I'll be happy all day.

III

June smells so sweet,
makes you want to eat the
cool breeze, air as
it surrounds you,
just want to give up.
The crayon box open,
so you can see all the beauty
when June is alive.

IV

June, full of secrets
and good memories
and neon streets,
mystery sounds,
dreaming of flying
with the air.

Ashley Barber, Grade 9
Ballou Senior High School

THE ROUND TABLE

(inspired by George Braque)

The old guitar cries
For lack of being played
The lyrics crumpled on
The floor
Next to the shabby
Wall
In a forgotten corner,
The painter's pallet clean
The paintings slashed
With a sharp knife
The artist's life
Once like an open
Book of expression
Is now empty of
Ideas

Gabriela Noguchi, Grade 10
Parkmont School

SONNET MUSING

I dreamt daring dreams that lads daren't dream,
Conquered overt, hopeless opposition,
Also engendered an eternal beam,
Of light through innate determination.

Yet I was never satisfied with life,
It seemed that I didn't have enough might,
To do anything I willed without strife.
Why couldn't I have just simple delight?

Who fights against omnipresent oppression,
Without having constant lethargy?
Being too tired to enjoy success causes depression,
Failure is preordained without infinite energy.

Thus, my gravestone now reads,
Here lies one of little great deeds.

Neal M. Williams, Grade 12
Kingsbury

ODE TO THE MOON

The brightness that lights up the stars
centered in the middle with ostentation

Vivid as it is exquisite, surrounded by
its azure admirers. The night sky.

It is a sculpture of brilliance,
created by no human.

The way it glows, blinds us, it cannot be
reached. For it is an untouchable beauty.

The moon remains young, and still pretty,
notorious and wondrous every night.

Maryum Abdullah, Grade 9
Ballou Senior High School

LOST SOUL

What is a soul?
Is it something you hide from everyone else?
Is it who you really are?
Or is it how you feel on the inside?
A soul is said to be the ghostly form of you.
Which means you're just a host, and there is no need for you.
You're just a shell waiting to break
Just a person on earth for the lord to take
There is nothing you can do but wait.
Is a soul a mirror into the future?
Or a curse cast upon us from the past?
When you feel pain does your soul?
Is it because of your soul?
Why is there that hole?
That hole that never goes away
The hole you think came from pain
Yet, it has no name.
You turn around and look into the mirror.
Your body starts to become numb.
As you finally figure you're nothing.
The shell finally breaks and you're free.
Or at least you think you are.
Because you're not in heave or hell,
No, you're a wandering essence
Destin, to roam the earth forever
With one question in your head
What do you call a soul that does not crossover?
Is it a ghost or merely a figment of your imagination?
And if it was then what and who are you?

By: A writer with questions

Eric Vance, Grade 12
Cesar Chavez Public Charter
High School (Capitol Hill
campus)

