

VOICES IN VERSE
2009

**Winning poems from
OC Public Libraries
8th Annual
Teen Poetry & Art Contest**

Edited by
Sharon Henegar



VOICES IN VERSE

2009

Voices in Verse is an anthology
of the winning entries from
OC Public Libraries'
2009 Teen Poetry & Art Contest.
The top winning poems from each branch
are compiled here, with cover art
by the two system-wide winners.
We thank the librarians and judges,
and especially the young writers and artists
who shared their talents.



OCPL's Teen Services Committee

April 15, 2009

About the covers:

Front cover: "Monet Refuses the Operation" by
Montserrat Espino, age 17, Tustin High School. Entered
at Tustin Branch Library.

Back cover: "MIND. HEART. PENCIL." by Gaby
Suarez, age 16, Anaheim High School. Entered at
Chapman Branch Library.

Table of Contents

Aliso Viejo Branch Library.....	4
Brea Branch Library	7
Chapman Branch Library	10
Costa Mesa/Donald Dungan Branch Library	13
Cypress Branch Library	16
Dana Point Branch Library	19
El Toro Branch Library.....	22
Foothill Ranch Library	25
Fountain Valley Branch Library	27
Garden Grove Regional Library.....	30
Irvine/Heritage Park Regional Library.....	33
Irvine/Katie Wheeler Library	36
Irvine/University Park Branch Library	39
La Habra Branch Library	42
La Palma Branch Library.....	45
Ladera Ranch Branch Library.....	48
Laguna Beach Branch Library	50
Laguna Hills Technology Branch Library	53
Laguna Niguel Branch Library	54
Los Alamitos/Rossmoor Branch Library	57
Mesa Verde Branch Library.....	59
Rancho Santa Margarita Branch Library	62
San Clemente Branch Library.....	65
San Juan Capistrano Regional Library.....	68
Seal Beach/Mary Wilson Branch Library	71
Stanton Branch Library	73
Tustin Branch Library.....	76
Villa Park Branch Library.....	79
West Garden Grove Branch Library	82
Westminster Branch Library.....	85
Branch Library Locations	88
Index	91

ALISO VIEJO BRANCH LIBRARY

THE LITTLE BIRD IN THE NEST

On a warm sunny day,
A bird and its family sit in a nest.
All of the siblings go out to play,
The little bird needs to stay and rest.
The little bird in the nest,
All left alone,
Sees the family fly west,
And lets out a moan.
She wants to join,
But she can't fly,
Her wings are about the size of the biggest coin,
But she feels she must try.
The little bird in the nest,
Feels the wind pick up speed,
Puffs out her chest,
And begins to flee
The little bird out of the nest,
Begins to fall,
Realized that this wasn't the best
Idea after all.
Her brother catches her from up high,
Puts her in the nest,
And teaches her how to fly.
The little bird that was in the nest,
No longer has silence.
She realizes that the key to success
Really involved guidance.
The little bird now flies, indeed. The little bird is really me.

By Marina Castellanos
Age 12; Don Juan Avila Middle School
First Place: Aliso Viejo Branch Library

MEMORIES

As I walk through the double doors,
Finally escaping the bustling city,
I look around me.
Right before my eyes are the remains of what used to be my
best friend's house.
The tile is cracked and falling apart, overgrown with vines
and pink flowers.
As I walk back towards their pool, I see that it is now a river.
The water is calm and clear as it lazily slides by the bank
There are trees carelessly hanging over the edge,
Dipping their branches into the warm water
I quickly stand up and walk back to the front of the house.
There is nothing to see here.
Just old memories that no longer matter.

By Amber Anderson
Age 14; St. Edward the Confessor Parish School
Second Place: Aliso Viejo Branch Library

AN ENDLESS WAIT

Boats full of tears,
From being separate.
A heart full of fear,
From being found out.
A deserted soul,
That wants to be found.
Yearning for the control,
To run my own life.
A body embedded with passion,
For the love of another.
A dark fashion,
That does not help me cope.
A stomach full of knots,
Hoping he won't eventually move on.
Electric thoughts,
Not knowing how to tell him.
A shoulder with a meaningful touch,
As I feel the moment of not being able to breathe.
A clear flowing liquid from a cut,
As I think of the stinging pain from inside my heart.
I want to be happy,
But I do not know how.
An endless wait,
With a hopeful smile that shines like the stars.

By Christina Green
Age 18; Aliso Niguel High School
Third Place: Aliso Viejo Branch Library

BREA BRANCH LIBRARY

GOLD

gold,

giver of eternal life,
the flesh of the gods,

endures in our barbaric world,
from the want of our uncertain man,

quenching the thirst of war and poverty,
nature's torment to man's imagination,

a threshold on human through lust and greed,
yet a symbol of beauty and wealth, an immortality

By Caleb Espinoza
Age 15; Brea Olinda High School
First Place: Brea Branch Library

THE DARKNESS

The fog rolls over the water,
a light mist swirls around the crow's nest;
the silence chokes the main mast
and the darkness is like a nightmare.

The waves are gentle,
submissive almost,
to the darkness as it closes in.

The canvas sails shudder,
and the old wood creaks.

The wooden mermaid stays ever still.
Seaweed caresses the bottom of the ship
and moving gently in the darkness,
the clouds are dark and threatening.
Not a star is out on this silent night,
nor is man or beast.

A wind whips up the side of the ship
and is silenced as it's overcome by the darkness.

Thunder is heard many miles away,
breaking the silence and startling the darkness;
more clouds roll in and it starts to rain,
the tiny drops stroking the silent mermaid.

The darkness slinks back into nooks and crannies,
waiting for the next night to choke the world again.

By Alex Lang
Age 15; HOPE Christian School
Second Place: Brea Branch Library

CONFRONTING OUR FUTURE

Eyes closed
The sound of your rushed writing
Somehow brings back pretending to be reporters
With our Kleenex tissues as notes
At the place of our sisterhood's beginning
I haven't made it back since the funeral
We are so alike, yet so different
What happens after high school?
What happens after college?
What happens after careers, marriages, and families?
Time's slipping away, and we aren't grasping it
Your writing stops, homework done
Eyes open

By Ida Mojadad
Age 15; Brea Olinda High School
Third Place: Brea Branch Library

CHAPMAN BRANCH LIBRARY

SCIENTIA POTENTIA EST

To be educated is more than being
able to write and read letters and words.
More than holding yourself up with respect,
with courage and leadership.
Being learned is more than just
knowing about the world and the
cultures that inhabit it.
Having a past you can learn from
and understanding how to always grow.
Realizing being schooled will not always come from
any building or place you would call an
institutionalized wisdom lyceum, or school.
Erudition will only get you so far
without motivating actuation and heart.
And even the most intellectual know
venality ain't worth your soul.
Be humble and prosper, dear fledgling.
Become like a warrior,
armed with cognizance.
"For also knowledge itself is power".

By Rachel L. Henson
Age 18; A.C.C.E.S.S Independent Study
First Place: Chapman Branch Library

WHEN THE RAINS HAVE CEASED

When the rains have ceased
And the world is wet
Silently awaiting
The next storm yet,

Worms come out of hiding
Writhing in the streets
The sun continues shining
And light and darkness meet

A rainbow emerges
And makes a child smile
The rainwaters surging
Were worth all the while

By Citlali Olvera
Age 13; Ralston Intermediate School
Second Place: Chapman Branch Library

LOVE IS A MIRROR MAZE

Love is like a mirror maze
that puts you in a daze
once you get in you can't get out
you only go in circles because of your doubt
trying to escape from the pain
that causes you to be inane
everywhere you look you are reminded of him
you even remember the good times spent in the gym
but once you find the right route
you can finally get out

By Paloma Ornelas
Age 15; Rancho Alamitos High School
Third Place: Chapman Branch Library

**COSTA MESA/DONALD DUNGAN
BRANCH LIBRARY**

I SEE

The eye is a beautiful thing.
You could see all things in life.

Even though I need glasses to read,
I could still see big things, like a school.
In my eyes I could see a rainbow,
all the colors:
red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple.

I see the amazing yellow sand
right next to the crystal blue sea.

I could just feel the waves
pounding and singing to me.

I remember seeing that big green tree.

That tree was so beautiful to me.

Man, can you see.

I see myself climbing that huge mountain,
one foot at a time.

I cannot believe it, I am at the top.

I am looking at the sun, how it shines.

Right next to the sun are the clouds.

White as the beautiful snow.

One day I want to touch them,
so I have to skydive and go.

I could see the pretty birds
flying in the sky.

I could also see the fireworks
bursting so high.

Yes, in the world,

I have seen a lot of beautiful things, but not an elf.

One of the most beautiful things in the world

Is Yourself.

By King Solomon Bussell
Age 15; Corona Del Mar High School
First Place: Costa Mesa/Donald Dungan Branch Library

MR. CLOCK GOES TICK-TOCK

Mr. Clock is always telling me.
time to wake up time to go to school
time to eat lunch time to go home
time to go to bed same schedule all the time.
Mr. Clock runs my life, never to let me be me
He never listens not even once
there is no talking to him
all he does is *rush, rush, rush*
can't ever give me a break never lets me sit and rest
I can't wait till the day Mr. Clock runs out of battery
then maybe I can rest in peace.

By Daniel Reskey

Age 14; Costa Mesa High School

Second Place: Costa Mesa/Donald Dungan Branch Library

EARTH

The planet Earth,
Which closely resembles a marble,
Of a blue and green swirled pattern,
All its wonders...
At which we can marvel.

By Gianna Jason
Age 13; Christ Lutheran School
Third Place: Costa Mesa/Donald Dungan Branch Library

CYPRESS BRANCH LIBRARY

THE WORLD'S COLORS

The old colors were around for a while,
And they always used to make me smile.
Green was the grass, growing so tall.
Red, orange and yellow were the leaves in the fall.
Here is the sky, so clear, and blue.
Purple was a flower, as sweet as you.
Those were the original colors, take a look at them now.
Red was the blood, so dark and dreadful.
It came from a soldier, so sad and hurtful.
Green were the uniforms, the soldiers would wear.
Oh, all the love these people would tear.
Black was the power, blasting from a gun.
These men would fight, all day in the sun.
Gray were the words, mean people said.
It was also a grave where people lay dead.
These are the colors that I would most fear,
Because they make the world, start to disappear.

By Phi Do
Age 12; Oxford Academy
First Place: Cypress Branch Library

SAVING OUR ENVIRONMENT

I cannot make a difference by saying, "Goodbye,"
But I can make a difference by saying, "Hi."... "Hi!"
The world's main issue is global warming,
And I'll start with what happened this morning.

When I looked out of my second story window,
I couldn't even hear a voice, "Hello."
But I could hear this... There was trash and debris
flying in a gigantic tornado.

Recycling?, Yes.
Half of it could be recycled ... paper, glass, plastic, and more.

Understanding air pollution and its whereabouts,
I guess that's the cars.
The air... it's no longer like sweet candy bars.

I know of all sorts of vehicles:
Hybrids, diesel, solar powered and gasoline,
Natural gas, electrical, and crazy machines.

Besides global warming, There *is* much more to do.
Being caring, helpful, honest and kind,
That's a contribution too!

There is so much more to do,
Much more.
But the world cannot function, Without feeling sore.

I can make a difference by doing many things,
Good *not* bad, Only one is really good,
After all, this is our place;
Treasure it, for without Earth, we'd all be floating in outer space.

By Benjamin Yeh
Age 12; McAuliffe Middle School
Second Place: Cypress Branch Library

SILENCE

The silence between me and you kills me secretly inside.
When you're around, I try my best to put on a grin
But behind the smile I wear, lies tears that I hide.
When we sit in the same room my heart shrivels up and dies.
I thought leaving you was right
But I now know it wasn't very wise.
Even when we are next to each other, the silence tears us apart
I wish I had the guts to talk to you
But I don't even know where to start.
Silence...why must it happen between the two of us?
Maybe it was destined by God.
Is our friendship now worthless?
Everyday I wake up, hoping to find my life as a dream
But reality somehow hits me
And as I sit there, finally realizing silence's scheme.
For its lesson is not to tear us apart
Nor for us to depart.
But perhaps for me to learn the pain.
The pain of losing you...
The pain I can't restrain...

By Thucdan Ton
Age 13; Oxford Academy
Third Place: Cypress Branch Library

DANA POINT BRANCH LIBRARY

SHATTERED

Alone

Tucked away in the darkness

The light does not know me

The world has forgotten me

I said what I said because I thought it was right

But through the world's eyes I was wrong

What can I do to prove myself?

Will you ever see the world through my eyes?

Or is it too late

Have the flames of anger already consumed our love?

I wish with all my soul that I could turn back the hands of time

And go back to the place where my heart was shattered

Then I would tell you how much I love you

Then I would swallow my pride

Because your love is worth so much more than that

But it is too late

You will not listen to my words because t

hey are words you do not want to hear

You cannot understand my heart because

you cannot understand who I really am

But I can still live my life

I can still love my life

Alone

By Tessia Gujardo

Age 14; Capo Beach Calvary Junior High School

First Place: Dana Point Branch Library

THE FOREST

In the forest is a quiet utopia, which has mystery at every turn.

I hear the ghostly whisper that comes from it.

Then I hear the soft song of a babbling brook.

The mighty trees around me seem tall enough to brush the sun.

And the image of a wild deer that is the majestic nomadic ruler of the forest.

At every turn there is danger, but is it our job to conquer it?

By Caitlin Rafferty

Age 13; Capo Beach Calvary Junior High School

Second Place: Dana Point Branch Library

OHIO

Freshly glazed snow receives the new falling
Little kids catch flakes on their tongues
Moms in their winter pjs
With freshly brewed coffee
Hot chocolate, cookies, apple cider
Walking through the door
Mom's perfume and dad's cologne
My dog barks, my cat purrs
They jump into my lap
Donning the gear for skiing
Sledding and playing in the snow
The feeling of a lit fireplace on your face
And a warm libation in your throat
The loving feeling of your
Friends and family around

By Alyssa Mckown

Age 13; St. Edwards School

Third Place: Dana Point Branch Library

EL TORO BRANCH LIBRARY

A TEENAGER'S QUESTION

Why do they call us
Rebellious,
Defiant?
Is it because
We're beginning to know
Ourselves
And who we are
In the world?

I don't try to
Change
So much,
So fast, but
It seems as if
I'm a caterpillar,
Just starting to form
My cocoon,
Not knowing
What butterfly
I have yet to become.

We aren't trouble-makers all the time,
We're just unsure,
Confused.
Transforming so swiftly, we
Don't even think to look
Before we leap.
Will we fall?
Or fly?

By Mandy Auer
Age 14; Los Alisos Middle School
First Place: El Toro Branch Library

THE WIND

The wind will come and it will go
Coming with happiness and hope
Playing in the trees their branches will blow
Whistling through the rocky slopes
The wind will come and it will go

Dancing with the waves of the ocean
Prancing on the sandy shores
Making that damp, salty breeze
The wind likes blowing in the seas

The wind will come and it will go
Tumbling through clear blue skies
Through the hot city blow
Soon the wind slows and dies
The wind will come and it will go

Leaving you with lament and sorrow
Leaving steady the feisty sea
The wind will come in the tomorrow
Alone the world lies at ease

By Lisa Gonzalez
Age 12; Los Alisos Middle School
Second Place: El Toro Branch Library

STOLEN INNOCENCE

I miss the innocence
The society stole from us.
It doesn't make much sense
To rush through life so fast.
This new generation
Depends so much on media,
Where technology is the only
means of communication;
An era wide spreading hysteria.
Lies in politics,
No chance for liberation.
The society finding beauty in sticks.

Where you're either subject to stereotypes
Or labeled as a total misfit.
Stars, red and white stripes,
Patriotism seems unfit.
Battles transform into wars
Full blown experience
Through television sets; like Star Wars.

Where is common sense?
Was there any before?
Life seemed less complicated
When you don't know what's in store.
Brainwashed, blinded, badly situated—
What more?

I wish they'll give back our ignorance
That they carelessly stole,
So we could happily return
To our sweet, blithe innocence.

By Justine Leavell
Age 17; El Toro High School
Third Place; El Toro Branch Library

FOOTHILL RANCH LIBRARY

THE SOUND OF BREAKING

The sound of breaking
Hurts your ears
Because it's so quiet

The sound of breaking
Hurts your neck
Because you're always
Looking back

The sound of breaking
Hurts your eyes
Because they're always
Searching for the mistake

The sound of breaking
Hurts your bones
Because of the weight
You're always
Carrying

The sound of breaking
Hurts because it's
Yours

By Tara Johnson
Age 17; Trabuco Hills High School
First Place: Foothill Ranch Branch Library

MAYBE...

I thought I'd live not to regret them,
My little heart's desires.
But they grew and morphed into warped distortions,
And kind of made me cry.

Maybe we could have been something
Something pretty,
Something new.
Maybe you could have happened a little different.

I'm not that sad,
But just in case, you should know how
Little I want you trapped in my cage.

Maybe I could have been something
A little different,
A little stronger.
Maybe we're a perfect nothing.

You should know why I didn't bother coming over here.
But that's not why I'm trying not to talk now.
We're not...the right...song.

Maybe you could have been something
Slightly different,
Slightly better.
Maybe life isn't meant to be so kind.

Tonight I'll go and promise you
That I'll be okay alone.
Would you still believe it when I
Fall off the curb?

Maybe it should have been something
Worth the torture,
Worth a last dance.
Maybe I haven't changed a bit.
...Maybe I don't regret it anyway.

By Katie McGrade
Age 16; El Toro High School
Second Place: Foothill Ranch Branch Library

**FOUNTAIN VALLEY
BRANCH LIBRARY**

DAY TRIP TO SAN DIEGO

Chill rush of morning air
We stood out on the platform,
waiting . . .

High-pitched whistle
Bells clash and clatter
Iron grates against steel.

We leave the grey gloom of a slumbering day
at the station
Patches of scenery!

Lush landscape
A junkyard
Trees and flowering plants
Chain link fences and graffiti

Aromas of street vendors
Hot buttered tortillas melt in our mouths
As we savor each bite.

Souvenir shops, antique shops, a market or two . . .
I buy bands of silver and a keychain.

Salt-laced air whips our hair
As we stand on the deck
and cruise into a falling sun.

By Amy Hillberg
Age 18; Orange County High School of the Arts
First Place: Fountain Valley Branch Library

A SHADOW'S MANY FACES

Your very own twin,
dark and on the ground.
A person eating up the light,
leaving nothing but darkness.
A secret spy,
following you everywhere everyday.
Home of good shade,
taking many forms but still very cool.
A way of entertainment in the dark,
only a flashlight is needed.
Your own personal mine,
mimicking all your movements.

By Patrick Nguyen
Age 13; St. Barbara School
Second Place: Fountain Valley Branch Library

UNKNOWN ROAD

Where doth faith truly lie?
In those twists and turns of the roads ahead.

Those roads unseen
Those roads unknown
Where doth the question truly lie?

The stories of the past are told.
The future of a life unfolds.
Where many things go by untold
In those twists and turns of the roads ahead.

Many pasts are merely read
Those paths where many still might tread
For those paths are full of dangers untold
In those twists and turns of the roads ahead.

One day those crossroads of life will meet
And many will fall around in defeat
For the decision they made on which path they'll tread
In those twists and turns of the roads ahead.

Where doth faith truly lie?
In those twists and turns of the roads ahead.

Those roads unseen
Those roads unknown
Where doth thou strength truly lie?

By Aileen Tran
Age 16; La Quinta High School
Third Place: Fountain Valley Branch Library

**GARDEN GROVE
REGIONAL LIBRARY**

LOST BUTTERFLY

The fragile butterfly
very lost, very lonely but still wanders along
through crowds of whispering flowers
past the meadows of busy working bees
flying through beyond the stages of life
all alone, by itself
going through simple, basic changes
in the vast open sky
waiting for something to happen
while fluttering around constantly
Soon darkness engulfed the horizon
the living light was no where to be seen
Soaring past countless beings
racing the fear built inside
embracing every little courage it had
flew through the endless sky
looking, just looking for a small opening
through the wall of empty space
past the shadows of figures
fear accelerated up to its antennae
faster and faster it flew
wings beating harder at full pace
towards the unseen light through different courses
up jumped the lively sun
slowly waking from its slumber
safely slowing down the pace
catching every breath, resting, just resting,
and pleased to be alive
with the bright light shining high up above
the light of life.

By Julie Tran
Age 15; Santiago High School
First Place: Garden Grove Regional Library

THE DREAMER

maybe it is just my imagination
just a desire ... a dream
an illusion
something I will never reach
something I can never grasp
but that's the beauty of a dream
you just do not know when will it come true
it may take an eternity
it may take seconds
you have turned me into a dreamer
a believer
although you seem impossible
I will reach for you
you will be mine
our hearts will reunite
I hope things change
the thought of holding you in my arms imprisons me
It hurts to know you're not here
soon I will hold you
the nightmare will end the dream will come true
the kiss in the forehead will too
our hearts will beat as one
I will taste your lips of wine
a dream come true
the dreamer

By Hector Espinoza
Age 17; Santiago High School
Second Place: Garden Grove Regional Library

THE TRUTH ABOUT LIGHTBULBS

A lightbulb gives light
a common misconception
that it makes the world bright
but such is one deception

A lightbulb is not what it seems
turn it on and you will see
it actually absorbs the dark that fills your dreams
of which you were so determined to be

Think not that our world is dark
but that originally it is bright
that the world has not lost its spark
but is simply covered in spite

It is our lightbulb of which we rely
a vacuum not meant to create light
but to suck the blacks from our sky
so we can again see our might

The truth about lightbulbs is
they are proof of our keenness
in a world that has become an empty abyss
our lightbulbs continue to absorb the darkness.

By Angie Nguyen
Age 15; La Quinta High School
Third Place: Garden Grove Regional Library

**IRVINE/HERITAGE PARK
REGIONAL LIBRARY**

A WELLING OF WISHES

There are so many ways to wish.
Kept much too hopeful,
you think:
please just one more birthday
one more dandelion spray
another thousand airplanes
or one last penny
thrown
down
two stories
into the fountain at the mall.
Wishes?
You say:
I know,
I know,
they don't come true at all.
(but still,
you think:
can't I have a falling star
since I've heard
so many of them there are)

By Elice Leung
Age 16; Irvine High School
First Place: Heritage Park Regional Library

EDITING

secretly, she smiles when you say
good girl
even though it makes her feel like a dog.
and she wanted that cigarette
to see what it could do
tired of that vacancy in her lungs
because the oxygen left
just like you did
to answer your phone
to get something a little better.
pretty.
and she likes the gleam
that covers her arm
and her thigh
when the sun speaks.
her lips turn pink when she bites them
and eyes blue when the boy makes his exit look
so effortless
and this time when she needs that voice late at night
when her body is shaking
and her legs won't move
maybe she'll stop
because the kitchen is far
and think, her back snaking down the wall,
it's so damn beautiful
to forget that call
with the wind so cold
and breath so silver
maybe
she'll just stay here.

By Hannah Webster
Age 16; Irvine High School
Second Place: Heritage Park Regional Library

I BELIEVE IT WAS PEACE

I was sitting under a tree one day
It was a beautiful, sunny day
I was reading in the shade in a sundress,
Trying to escape the boiling heat

Wind swished through my hair
I looked up, watching a mother bird feed her young
I heard ducks quacking in the lake
And bees buzzing near the flowers

I lay down on my back and closed my eyes,
Enjoying the warmth of the sun on my skin
A calm feeling suddenly overwhelmed me
I believe it was peace

I was sitting outside in my backyard one night
It was a cold, moonlit night
I sat by a fire, roasting marshmallows
Trying to stay warm in the freezing darkness

A shooting star flew by overhead
I looked up, staring at the bright, twinkly stars
I heard an owl hooting nearby
And a coyote howling in the woods

I lay down on a lawn chair, wrapped in my blanket
Staring at the beauty of the constellations in the silence
A relaxing feeling suddenly overpowered me
I believe it was peace

By Chuli (Regina) Zeng
Age 13; South Lake Middle School
Third Place: Heritage Park Regional Library

**IRVINE/KATIE WHEELER
BRANCH LIBRARY**

ALTERNATE REALITY

The truth, they say, will set you free
but the truth will only alienate me and
my family

In this country all must be the same or
suffer shame and blame.

What sort of place, placed on being from a
different place or another race, hates?

Why must I play this game and deny
my true name? Are there others like me
in the land of the free, who must be what
they're not to avoid being caught?

Will I ever see the day when I'm free to be me
instead of an alternate reality?

By Anonymous
Age 16; Homeschooled
First Place: Katie Wheeler Branch Library

SMILE

A million years in a single footstep
So many adventures to explore
A thousand salty tears of a little girl
Yet they are all tears of joy
The sun shall shine on us
No matter if the sky be blue or grey
We shall all stand tall no matter what the case
A poor man walking by
Shall look down into a puddle of rain water
Yet he shall see only a smile

The days pass so quickly
Don't let a second slip by so easily
For each second can be filled with laughter and smiles
That you can cherish for all life
Don't let your time slip by unless it's filled with joy
Don't let your worrying stop you
Before you step out your front door

The world is full of bad
But the world is also full of joy
Each person that you reach out a hand to hold
Will pull you up when you too are cold
Come together families
And instead of anger dissolve the battles with peace
Instead of cutting down a tree
Take time to plant a new seed

Wake up in the morning and smile out to the world
Because our laughter will be heard from the highest mountains
And when we come together as one
Our smiles shall show,
Much brighter than the sun

By Sajel Oelerich
Age12; Pioneer Middle School
Second Place: Katie Wheeler Branch Library

MY SACRED

The sacred place where I reside is far beyond the world of men.
A place that surpasses time and space,
And is solely seen through one's potent mind.
Somewhere where skies are never just blue
And clouds are rimmed with silver thread.
The sun, a ball of azure flames,
Whose light carves through waters of oceans deep.
The moon emits a youthful glow,
So golden it polishes the shade of night.
The barks of trees, velvet crimson,
With leaves speckled lavishly with stars.
The air is draped with hums of nothingness,
But sometimes an enchanting whisper hangs in the midst.
Rhythmic and soothing, the soft treading of feet
Of Mysterious creatures not yet to be found.
This magical place is not everlasting,
When I open my eyes I have come home.

By Tiffany Guo
Age 16; Arnold O. Beckman High School
Third Place: Katie Wheeler Branch Library

**IRVINE/UNIVERSITY PARK
BRANCH LIBRARY**

ODE TO THE PELICAN

Early morning on the sands at the beach
Seagulls shriek their greetings to each
Feathers glinting their black and their white
Soaring graceful in heavenly heights
But alas! A shadow, clumsy with glee
Draws in scorn from the gulls of the sea
A pelican, awkwardly fighting the winds
Flapping and struggling on with a grin
O pelican, pelican—bird of the clowns
Donned in those rags of grey and brown
Silly bag of feathers, bucket-ed beak
Hopelessly deformed, nature's freak
But has he no ears to heed their harsh cries
He fumbles along the welcoming skies
The seagulls, they prim and preen in disdain
Gorgeous, perfect, without a stain
O pelican, pelican—look not their way
Dance here and sing for what you portray
Herald of Seas, Copious Beak
Embracing these “flaws” that make you unique
The pelican laughs, the pelican sings
The pelican learns of love and such things
The pelican twirls, the pelican spins
All the while emanating bliss from within
O pelican, pelican—I beg you to stay
Seagulls and beauty will all pass away
But you—so gawky and light and bizarre
Someone will adore you for just what you are

By Hope Xu
Age 15; University High School
First Place: University Park Branch Library

SOLITUDE

Alone, she dances, leaps through the air,
moves to no audible music but that of her mind while
the silence soothes,
caresses her, embraces her.
She dances with it, towards it,
eyes closed, with only silence, enveloping silence.
At such hour, when the world sleeps, there are no cars honking,
no piercing cries of "hello!"
no conversations to hold and things to be said,
no dull roar of voices so that a single one, alone, is never
distinguishable.
But now, eyes closed, she spins and twirls amidst the silence
of the natural world
yet to the music of her mind.
Her hair damp with the air of breaking dawn,
she inhales the purity of the early mist,
dances through the sleeping, liquid jewels upon the grass
as they twinkle with the newborn light of morning.
Alone, she dances to her solitude, among the mist and light
She dances, never wanting to return.

By Katherine Fu
Age 17; University High School
Second Place: University Park Branch Library

SLIMY LIMY

When I was ten, I found a little garden snail on a rainy day,
I named him Slimy Limy because he was gooey and gray.
I felt so happy when Slimy Limy crawled all over my hands,
I loved him so much; I can still remember his yellow bands.

The instant I saw Mr. Limy, I knew we're meant to be friends,
I just knew we'd be there for each other until the very end.
In the park or the movie theater, I took Slimy wherever I went.
I even took him camping once in our big green and grey tent.

I showed all my friends how wonderful Slimy Limy could be,
They all said Slimy was really cool, even my teachers agreed.
So this was how I spend three very wonderful years of my life,
I promised Slimy when I get married, I'll show him to my wife.

One day, I accidentally left the jar lid open and left for school,
Slimy Limy crawled out and escaped. Oh! I was such a fool!
I remember crying really hard when I found out he was gone,
When we played together, I felt like nothing could go wrong.

Now that I've grown up, I lost the magic I once used to possess,
I can no longer find joy in every little thing due to school's stress.
But once in a while, when I look out my window on a rainy day,
I could almost swear I saw Slimy Limy in his jar, all gooey and grey.

By Jeff Xu
Age 18; University High School
Third Place: University Park Library

LA HABRA BRANCH LIBRARY

CHILD OF LIES

Little child, little child
Always told to act like everybody else,
Never to be yourself,
For if you don't they ignore you, treating you like a pest,
To grow up not like the rest
Little child, little child
Almost an adult,
Going from one cliché to the other,
Keeping the words of your father and mother,
Switching your masks of personalities never your own,
Doing this so you're not alone
Little child, little child
Now an adult on your own,
Feeling so dull, living in a dark shawl, covering who you are,
Slipping and slipping farther and farther away,
Never to be you trapped for ever in a life of lies,
Always trying to get by,
Taken by your masks, never to return, burning inside
Little child, little child
How sad never to be you, only what the world wants
you to be,
Forever to be known as a Child of Lies

By Alexandra Mackintosh
Age 15; Sonora High School
First Place: La Habra Branch Library

I DREAMED

I dreamed of a love
a love so true
and then from above
god sent you
when our eyes meet
i turned away
only to regret
that grateful day
i search in the dark
to find that key
that triggers the spark
you put in me
i want to see that my love is true
even though we can't be
I'll still hold my true love for you
see you smiling every day
hide the way i feel
want to tell you everything
but my lips are sealed
loving you with all my heart
but you will never know
feelings for you are locked away
hoping they will never go away
i never cease to be amazed
how beautiful you look
now my heart will suffer in silence
because of the chance i never took

By Anthony Gonzalez
Age 14; Sonora High School
Second Place: La Habra Branch Library

HAVE YOU EVER....

Have you ever loved?
Have you ever lost?
Have you ever felt the pain
Of what mistakes have cost?

Have you ever laughed?
Have you ever cried?
Have you ever seen the tomb
Of the one you knew that died?

Have you ever caused?
Have you ever felt?
Have you ever been so empty
That your heart should surely melt?

Have you ever broken?
Have you ever had to mend?
Have you ever reached what will one day
Be a sure, sad, lonely end?

By Talia Salido
Age 13; Imperial Middle School
Third Place: La Habra Branch Library

LA PALMA BRANCH LIBRARY

DEAR GOD

Dear God, are you there?
I'm the little girl down here,
With my tear filled eyes.
I am only six years old
You probably cannot see me
My two tiny hands I hold in prayer
The tears from my eyes have dampened my hair

Dear God, I just don't understand
What did I ever do to this man?
The sun goes away with the end of another day.
I lay here in bed and wonder how much he drank today
I shiver at the thought
The light moves in and the wooden door creaks
I can smell the vodka and how much it reeks
My little body is tearing
But this heartless man shows no caring
It is over now
But I can still feel the pain
I am still alive, although I feel dead inside
Why each time do I have to survive?
I still love him.
If only he'd stop drinking
Maybe he'd remember that he loves me too and what was he
thinking.

Dear God, please help my daddy
I'm the little girl down here with the tear filled eyes.

By Desiree Foja
Age 17; John F. Kennedy High School
First Place: La Palma Branch Library

THE ONE THAT NEVER WAS

I did not wish to be this
A pathetic little thing, I am.
Left to ponder the whys and maybes alone.
Alone upon your lips
I wait in question
Yet still her heart hangs
Around your neck and even mine—
Save you? Save me
From losing
Not a heart's piece
But *you* entirely
Please
Be *here*, sit, laugh
My friend
I surrender
Let my love remain
Visible and glistening.

By Colleen Ryan
Age 18; John F. Kennedy High School
Second Place: La Palma Branch Library

EVERYONE HAS A RIGHT

Everyone has a right to freedom
The important thing is to realize the invisible chains
of that right
You don't understand?
There are "rules" and "laws" that people must follow
And they call this the "Land of the Free"?

Everyone has a right to live
The important thing is not to take advantage of that right
You don't understand?
To take advantage of living is to tempt death
Such as skydiving or rock climbing
A situation you created for the thrill of tempting death

Everyone has a right to choices
The important thing is to make good use of that right
You don't understand?
People's choices are interesting
Even when they have an idea of what will happen
Tend to choose wrong actions

Everyone has a right to light
The important thing is not to be blinded to that right
You don't understand?
Stare at the sun, or at anything for too long
And you can't see anything else

Yes we have all kinds of rights
It's up to us to use those rights wisely
By using these rights we learn
And become the people we are today

By Ryan Kushi
Age 16; John F. Kennedy High School
Third Place: La Palma Branch Library

LADERA RANCH LIBRARY

A PERFECT DAY

All quiet and peaceful,
The baseball field lay.
Undisturbed chalk,
And undisturbed clay.

The morning sun rises,
Shimmers on the grass.
The blue sky glimmers,
Like well refined glass.

The field stayed dormant,
Until three o'clock.
Then out come the players,
In a jovial walk.

The ball hits the bat,
With a resounding crack.
It flies through the air,
And then is thrown back.

The dirt gets ruffled,
With pounding feet.
Slides spread the chalk,
And the mound gets beat.

But what I like,
About this glorious game,
Is the toiled mess,
Without any shame.

A perfect day,
Living American dreams.
I love to play baseball,
It's in my genes.

By Kyle Mellinger
Age 14; Mountain View School
First Place: Ladera Ranch Library

WEATHER OR NOT

Stormy or Sunny
Dry or Wet
Rainy or Clear sky
Snowy or Hot
The weather has a mind of its own.
Deciding Deciding
Why or What
To do for the Day
Wild or Calm
Harsh or Quiet
Easy or Hard
Decision
Decision
Why must I decide?
Weather or not
Good or Bad
Silent or LOUD
Daydreaming or Focused
Sad or Happy
Dirty or Clean
Excuses or Honest
What must I decide?
Should I decide?

By Rose Walsh
Age 13; Capo Beach Calvary Junior High School
Second Place: Ladera Ranch Library

LAGUNA BEACH BRANCH LIBRARY

WHO ARE THEY?

They are the abused
The small
And the silenced forced to invisibility
Who are they?
They are the struggling
The tear stained face
The scarred silent
Who are they?
They are the misexposed
The young corrupted
The wrong road taken
Who are they?
They are the illegal and the prescription drug
The addiction or alcohol
The 'any sharp enough' object
Who are they?
They are the raped
The violently used
And the hollow shell
Who are they?
They are the crying out
The bitterly broken
The young and child bearing
Who are they?
They are the suicidal
The single thread holding everything together
The ones clinging to life
But who are they?
Do you see them? Can you hear them? Who are they?
They are the attention seeking children. Help them.

By Annie Padayao
Age 17; Laguna Beach High School
First Place: Laguna Beach Branch Library

MY MOTHER'S EYES ARE GREEN

His name has found no home in my memory
For his face I have never seen
How can that be?
Well I know for one my Mother's eyes are green
The day I meet my other gene
I wonder if I will then feel complete
Well I know for one my Mother's eyes are green

By Maryellis Bunn
Age 17; Laguna Beach High School
Second Place: Laguna Beach Branch Library

SWARMS OF BEES

I came home at 2 o'clock,
standing at the front door I begin to unlock,
when all of the sudden a buzzing arises,
and I opened my door to many tiny surprises,
the house was speckled with yellow and black,
I was frightened at the sight of this sudden attack,
bees hurrying about zooming every which way,
my house had turned into a beehive to my dismay,
unsure of what to do, and how to react,
I grabbed a newspaper and began to whack,
growing tired and weary I began to give up,
I went to my fridge and grabbed a 7Up,
letting the bees take over my home,
I sat down and decided to write this poem.

By Danielle Cudmore
Age 17; Laguna Beach High School
Third Place: Laguna Beach Branch Library

**LAGUNA HILLS TECHNOLOGY
BRANCH LIBRARY**

TO YOU

I offer you the moon, the planets and the stars.
I have everything you don't need or want. I can
only offer you a life surrounded by love and laugh.
A life that moves around your desires.

I promise you a life where we can breathe
fresh air looking at the universe die, but it
seems that it is not good enough. Not even
my soft young skin or the love I feel for you.

So perfect and different is what we are. To you
just a past time, to me my whole life. For my disgrace
you are my weakness, the only one who can confuse
every word in my mouth.

For your peace you are the only one who I can love,
for everyone else an imperfect peace in this heart.
My love to you, dreams to them and soul to whoever
would take it.

My life it's devoted to your desire, to you my love,
happiness, all the best to you, my father. Just promise me,
you will love and wait for me after death, after ashes
and worms had eaten my beautiful eyes away.

By Guillermina Rodriguez
Age 18; Laguna Hills High School
First Place: Laguna Hills Technology Library

LAGUNA NIGUEL BRANCH LIBRARY

POWERFUL

You fly through the clouds
Your spellbinding voice echoes
Across the magical land
I sense your wish to be limitless
Fearlessness and rebellion waft off you
Into the air
You chant strange words
That I don't understand
You are sadly mistaken for wicked
But inside you are truly goodhearted
Born the way that you look
Holding an ancient book
Riding wildly, I watch you defy gravity
I stand in awe
Of your boldness and determination
To be free and accepted
I wish I could be as powerful as you

Along comes golden eyes
Looking through me
His voice like a roar
Echoes through the woods
Will the trees hide me?
The faint scent smell of wildflowers
Is taken over by a bold musk
Burly gold fur brushes against me
You feel softer than silk
I taste your strength and wisdom
I feel safe and protected
Powerful

By Tori Guarjardo
Age 13; Capo Beach Calvary Junior High School
First Place: Laguna Niguel Branch Library

LIFE

The sweet scent of the woods,
Seeing the leaves fall to the
Earth.
I sit on a log,
Just to watch nature
Live,
Squirrels running around and up trees,
Moose grazing
Beautifully
Laying back and looking up at the
Trees,
Just watching the beams of light penetrate through
The branches and leaves,
Of trees
A wolf crosses in front of me
This shows the independence of
Nature
It's the life of nature the presence.
This is
Life.

By Lucas Roberts
Age 14; St. Edwards School
Second Place: Laguna Niguel Branch Library

HE SAYS

He says,
Her kisses grant me wings
Her smile bestows me warmth.
Her touch makes me sing
This is the girl I love
She will wear my ring.

He means
One day we will walk together
One moment beneath the canopy of trees
One time while others watch, silently
All of you and me,
Two lovers allie, allie, oxen free

He loves,
We will never separate
We will walk side by side
As long as the sun radiates
These are the laws I will abide

He promises,

If the sun goes dark
And the world turns asunder
I will hold you in my arms
And lock out all
Thunder

He
Says.

By Daniel Anuari
Age 15; Dana Hills High School
Third Place: Laguna Niguel Branch Library

**LOS ALAMITOS/ROSSMOOR
BRANCH LIBRARY**

ONE APRIL AFTERNOON

The scent of jasmine
outside my window
Waltzes in lazily.
A wind chime tinkles softly
In the cool breeze
That rustles through birch branches,
Carrying baby spiders' parachutes
Into the blue blue sky.

And I wish I could sing,
Sing out loud and clear,
So that I might capture
This moment
In one bright note.

But since I cannot sing,
sing out loud and clear,
I will sing through my words.
As a penguin flies through water,
I will sing with my pencil
Of the sky and the earth
The sounds and the sights.
I will sing them
until my fingers refuse to move
until my eyelids collapse
until my song is done.

And I will fall asleep
To bright stars
outside my window
And the scent of jasmine
Waltzing in.

By Julia Ostmann
Age 15; Orange County High School of the Arts
First Place: Los Alamitos/Rossmoor Branch Library

TROUBLE

Go ahead and make some trouble
Step up the commotion make it double
Always question the authority
And never feel inferiority
And make sure to rock out loud
Do some things you're not allowed
Get in trouble and rock out louder
Hold your head high and do it prouder
Never ever ever cower
Be yourself and fight the power
Go against the institution
Set a trend, a revolution.

By Zoe Kreit
Age 14; Sage Hill School
Second Place: Los Alamitos/Rossmoor Branch Library

MESA VERDE BRANCH LIBRARY

HIM AND ME

My head was full and cloudy, so I decided to take a walk
I took a stroll into the park where I heard some boys begin to talk
I hid behind some bushes not wanting to be seen
There were two boys facing each other and one was being mean
“Shut up! You worthless scum!” One boy shouted to the other
The other boy stood where he was and I debated on getting my mother
I crouched down where I was not daring to make a sound
The other boy spoke for his voice he had found
“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me...”
Was all that he said
I looked to the first boy and by the look in his eye;
He wanted the other boy dead
He raised up his fist and struck down the boy who fell like a rock
The attacker stood there, laughed, and then began to mock
What a baby you are! My time I will waste no more!
Find me when you are a man, and then you can settle this score!”
With a laugh, he left leaving the other boy on the ground once the boy
Had vanished, I jumped into sight
And I spoke to the boy with my courage and my might
“Where did you hear that? That sentence so profound?”
The boy chuckled deeply as I helped him off the ground
“From my mother” he said as he smiled at me
“Words like those help me to see,
The ignorant people will always be here
And their asinine words are not worthy of my tears...”
But his eyes DID spill tears as he stood there before me
The pain on his face was easy to see, but I knew something
that I shared just between him and me
“Don’t listen to those words,” I said
“if you listen to those words, then you are better off dead!
Sticks and stones can break our bones, and words CAN hurt us too
But it is up to us if we let those words turn our spirits blue...”
The boy smiled a crooked smile at me, and from that smile I could see
A friendship form between him and me

By Elizabeth Nichols
Age 16; Pacific Coast High School
First Place: Mesa Verde Branch Library59

THE HOPEFUL GIRL AND THE DEEJAY

When I feel the remixed beat of shade,
I often feel the white heat he made.

When I feel that I'd like to dance,
I throw my bleak memories and dark hopes to chance.
But, when the artificial spotlight leaks on me,
I wish to disappear into the twilight sea.

As that lyric pours over me,
I'm just a shadow melting in this musical fondue
So that light won't meddle me,
'Cause I don't want to know what's true.

That song is reflecting what I am feeling.
My mirrored life is there, saying what I had
Before it shattered when my boyfriend battered
Our relationship to shards of rain,
Beating my body as those words now beat my brain.

The deejay starts a new song
That gets everybody moving along.
The lyric floods the light of dawn my soul,
Promising a different love can make me whole.

When I hear his reduced version of bright,
I can't help but wonder if he is right.

By Kirk Van De Walker
Age 18; Veritas Christian Academy
Second Place: Mesa Verde Branch Library

STORY OF THE WINDOWS

I want to be small again.
Hiding behind school desks,
solving math problems by counting on fingers.
Spelling tests and times tables,
when playing pretend was second only to cookies and milk.
I want to go back,
to when bad people were the kind
that took your toys when you were playing with them.
When my hair was blonde from the sun,
and my favorite color was yellow
because yellow was the color of sunshine.
I want to go back
to when the word “imagine” didn’t exist,
but I knew the definition by heart.
No one can stop the future from coming,
just as no one can stop the past from leaving.
Though my eyes used to shine,
now only a dim light remains
to remind me of what was.
I need to go back,
because I only see the dandelion,
not the weed it is growing out of;
and when I look up at buildings all I see are
the windows reflecting the clouds in the sky.

By Marina Salmon
Age 16; Costa Mesa High School
Third Place: Mesa Verde Branch Library

**RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA
BRANCH LIBRARY**

**I MEAN THIS WITH INFECTIOUS SARCASM...
BUT IT'S A LITTLE HUMID IN HERE.**

The ocean is sick.
And what can it do if no one will help?
In pain of for anything else.
There's no mother, not trip to the doctor, with pharmacy waiting on it.
And even if...Nothing medical can help.
Who even knew it was able to feel?
That it's easily bruised and unable to heal.
Ancient to immunity, timeless, ageless, old and never grew.
About the time we announce it cannot grow immune, can't adapt enough
to brush anything off.
Especially the lively infections testing its shores every day.
and every day it's running - running ragged up and down the bay.
Gravel scratching at its front,
Wind and weather trying to weather it away.
None and every doctor can say
Now, the ocean is sick.
Infernal toxins flooding it. Destroying scaly cells, with six-ring soda hoops
and slick.
The undercurrents in a skew.
The rip-tide's torn itself in two - it can't stand too much longer.
Could bleed into itself forever. The fever's getting stronger!
And its temperature will rise and rise, up banks, it will scale and climb
Up the nervous sea line.
While the quiet North becomes a spa - so the ocean can't relax, unwind,
And stay cool. More infection breaks away, getting heavier with every day
The little infections, supplying the larger,
Don't drive more efficient toxins and dump less in the bay.
And don't dispose of trash correctly. It all ends up there anyway.
Just shrug it off. Turn down the thermostat and say:
Forget the North, forget the ice. Ignore the fluffy dying lice
infecting all the melting ice.
The world was too cold anyway.

By Amy Sutherland
Age 17; Silverado High School
First Place: Rancho Santa Margarita Branch Library

ILLITERACY

Everywhere I go
Illiteracy surrounds me
And I do admit
It quite confounds me
How does one know what you mean,
Pray tell,
When "you are" is "ur"
And "how amusing" is
"lol?"

By Briana Mataya
Age 16; Tesoro High School
Second Place: Rancho Santa Margarita Branch Library

IT LOOKS DOWN ON US

The wall
Towering above us,
Gazing down on us,
With a smirk on its face,
Us,
Powerless, weak,
Frightened of the vast barricade,
It looks down on us,
Sneers,
We all look up,
And wither,
The wall
Towering above us,
Gazing down on us,
Expecting more,
We look up,
Look at our hand
Blisters
It looks down
We go back to work
The wall,
Towering above us,
Gazing down on us,
Laughing
Us,
Defenseless, hopeless
It looks down,
We open our mouths
Nothing comes out, but air
Speechless.

By Ryan Baine
Age 15; Santa Margarita High School
Third Place: Rancho Santa Margarita Branch Library

SAN CLEMENTE BRANCH LIBRARY

OCEAN

Majestic and entrancing

Commanding and omnipresent

I hear the roar as the waves hit the sand

I taste the salt as it splashes into my mouth

I feel the chill of the ice-cold water

I see the compassionate and destructive waves

The ocean is a wily temptress

She lures me over and over again

Then spits me out with hate and disgust

She commands respect from all who lay their eyes on her

She crushes rocks to pebbles

With no effort at all she ends lives

Yet we come back begging for more

Over and over again

Some call us crazy

But we beg her for the rush and adventure she gives us

Powerful and destructive

She calls to me day and night

Like I am in a trance, I fly to her

She lures me and I cannot resist

I crave the sense of adventure she gives me

By Nathan Lilly
Age 14; Capo Beach Calvary Junior High School
First Place: San Clemente Branch Library

MY DREAMS

Guarded by the mystery of your subconscious mind
The silent sounds you only think you hear
The protruding colors
The impossibilities
You don't realize you're in control
Reality fades away
Only to let in the insane circumstances
Your senses mildly alert and so aware of the world within
So strangely varying
1 moment a wish your heart makes the next
an inescapable nightmare
You wish it could only be true
But you know you're asleep
So enjoy the surrealness while it lasts
For you will wake up and forget

By Savannah Ray
Age 14; Capo Beach Calvary Junior High School
Second Place: San Clemente Branch Library

THE TENSION OF OPPOSITES

Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed
Air, water, Earth
Gandhi's fight
Hitler's peace
God's existence
The tension of opposites
The world we love
The world we hate
Children of God
Happy depression
Sad euphoria
Thinking heart
Feeling mind
Opposites fight
A billion of a kind
The Lord's mission
The devil's suspicion
A cold sun
A hot moon
A galaxy of wonder
A gentle bully
A violent saint
Wet desert
Dry rain
The darkest white
The blackest light
Everything is possible
Answers in the hands of god
Questions in the end of an endless mind
Immortal possibilities

By Indigo Taylor
Age 16; New Vista School
Third Place: San Clemente Branch Library

**SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO
REGIONAL LIBRARY**

SELF-CONTROL MUSIC

Fingers.
Where do they go? How will they move?
Across the
Keys,
Along the
Strings.

How do they feel?
Can I hold it in or do I have to let it out?
I want to speak—it's a universal language you know...
But sometimes I need to use
Self-Control,
In contradiction to my expression of
Music.

By Katalina Mananghaya
Age 13; St. Edward School
First Place: San Juan Capistrano Regional Library

THE DESERT

She is so vast
As far as the eye can see,
Making you want to jump on a bike and ride
Blinding, so bright, yet forever you can see
She is scorching, burning your soul like a bird flying
into the fiery abyss
Riding on the hard dirt, shredding, going off jumps
Flying into the air, wanting more
But she tells you, “no”
You hear the whisper of the wind crackling against your helmet
Riding into the night, a rider thinks he can go on together
Once you get a taste, you cannot stop
She is majestic
But unforgiving
You will change forever
After you have gotten a taste, the bike becomes a part of you
Riding, the dirt lashes onto you and you become one with the
bike
Taking care of your bike as you would your body
Then you spill out on the sand
Wheels turning on the bike as it lays on its side
You thought you rode the desert but it is she that has ridden you

By Joshua Nance
Age 14; Capo Beach Calvary Junior High School
Second Place: San Juan Capistrano Regional Library

WEATHER OR NOT

Stormy or Sunny—I feel confused
Dry or Wet—I smell a soggy Spring
Rainy or Clear sky—I hear tapping drops on my nose
Snowy or Hot—I touch melting snow
The weather has a mind of its own.
Deciding, Deciding—what will it be?
Why or What—what will I be?
To do for the Day—is that enough?
Wild or Calm—my heart like a sea
Harsh or Quiet—a smile inside
Easy or Hard—like taking a test
Decision—what else can the weather do?
Decision—what else can my heart do?
Why must I decide?—Whether or not
Good or Bad—Silent or LOUD
Daydreaming or Focused—Sad or Happy
Dirty or Clean—Excuses or Honest
Can't I just be myself?

By Rose O'Sharon Walsh
Age 13; Capo Beach Calvary Junior High School
Third Place: San Juan Capistrano Regional Library

**SEAL BEACH/MARY WILSON
BRANCH LIBRARY**

TRANSPARENCY

Is it her eyes that give her away?
The way she looks to her unraveling, untied shoelaces
Or the gray skyscraper rooftops
To avoid your innocent, bright-brown eyes?

Or maybe it's the way she smiles,
A sly grin carefully creeping,
With the cursed caring knowledge of
Underground prisoners,
That slides the painted mask off her pure, guilty face?

Is it the way she laughs and chuckles,
As you brush by the eternal lock on the door
On your slow, treacherous walk past the
Empty prison cell?

Or how her fingers twitch,
Tap tap tapping at her side,
Fist clenching and unclenching,
That point to her stone-cold heart?

Is it perhaps her silence?
How she opens her mouth to tease,
For a split second, then turns away?
Or how she laughs because the
Twisting, lurking riddle
Weaves through your fragile mind untouched?

Is it the longing in her transparently brown eyes,
The sad sighs in day's bright shadows,
How she guards the dirty, scratched paper in her binder,
Her frail, urgent voice as she teases,
Which tells your gently trusting mind
That...
She's lying.

By Sydney Char
Age 15; Chadwick School
First Place: Seal Beach Mary Wilson Library

POETRY IN MY OWN WORDS

A poem
May be lyrics without music
But it is more of a song without sound
A poem
Is a rhyme without reason
And never the other
Way around
A poem
Is a tone with a feeling
And a taste without touch
A poem
Is more than it seems—
Hardly just stray words and
Monosyllables
On paper
A poem
Is a poet's soul
Poured out for the whole world
To see and to
Know

By Danielle Lippincott
Age 13; McAuliffe Middle School
Second Place: Seal Beach Mary Wilson Library

STANTON BRANCH LIBRARY

FREE THE MIND

Thousands of children wasting time
Watching TV is a terrible sign

The mind of a child going slowly to waste
Their brains cannot keep up with the pace

Break away from TV, free the mind
They're in bondage and have become blind

This spreading plague has a simple cure,
Just let the imagination flow clean and pure

Stimulate the mind, engage your brain
You've got nothing to lose, but everything to gain

If you don't try you'll never know
So grab a pen and let the creative juices flow

By Ashley Cabassa
Age 18; Pacifica High School
First Place: Stanton Branch Library

ROBOT

Rusty, walking in the rain he rasps.
A Robot holes for eyes, the light behind them faded.
Trapped in endless rain.
Liquor store. Empty bottles. Needles.
People huddled against an old wall trying to stay dry.
Black graffiti drips down, street full of potholes.
Rain running into the screaming metal joints.
Walking in acid rain, under burning tears.

He runs.
There, up, on the other side of the wall,
Sunshine, a place to rest his rusting bolts.
He runs.
Faster, faster towards the clear sky.
Run.
Stumble.
Pulls up short. The cord that chains him.
His lifeline.
Plugged into the wall, without it he has nothing.
The wall's grey arms grasp at him.
It's the needy family, the needles sweet dream, the crew, safety, survival.
What else is there? Would he know how to live in the sun?
He must pull?

Pull.
The plug will not pull free.
The robot will not stop.
Pull.
The wall cracks, his lifeline snaps.
He hurls himself around the wall.
The green grass, the blue sky.
Unplugged his eyes fill with the sun.

By Rubi Trujillo
Age 17; Pacifica High School
Second Place: Stanton Branch Library

THE LIFE OF A STRUGGLER

Raised by a single mother with no family,
Young kid growing up in the ghetto streets,
His pops left him behind when he was only five,
He tells his mother “momma please, momma please don’t cry.”
He’s not a kid anymore, he's a grown man,
He has dreams, he has goals, he has plans,
But the bad childhood memories are catching up,
His family was never there and never showed him love,
His mind keeps on playing tricks on him all the time,
His pain and anger keep on growing and growing inside,
He wonders why all these thing always happen to him,
But there’s some questions that could never ever be explained.

By Edgar Flores
Age 17; Magnolia High School
Third Place: Stanton Branch Library

TUSTIN BRANCH LIBRARY

BLANK

I see
nothing; the only
color I have ever
seen is black
I live all alone in
my dark, dark world.
I hear though,
I hear really well,
sometimes I hear
people laughing and talking.
but i cannot join them,
i cannot see
the picture, i did not watch
the movie they saw.

I don't know what night is,
even though I have lived in it
every second of my life.
I cannot possibly imagine
the colors of a rainbow

The closest thing i have ever
been to seeing
was when my sister
described a picture she
had taken of me, but she did not
describe the way others do
she does not describe with colors,
but with things I can see.
like love, and sadness
and that was the sweetest, most
perfect moment I've ever experienced

By Nancy White
Age 12; Utt Middle School
First Place: Tustin Branch Library

MY FAIRYTALE GONE WRONG

Today's the day, I told myself
I'll just walk up to her and say...
"I have feelings for you. I've had a crush on you since the day
you came to our school."
That's no good; how about...?
"I wish I were your Romeo and could ride off with you, Juliet, uh,
into the sunset!"
Great, now she's gonna laugh at me
I can just imagine her back as she runs away from me
The evil monster who tried to steal the heart of a princess
Come on, kid. You are an actor, just improvise

I strode over to my girl
Her divine curly, brown hair rests on her shoulders blinding my eyes
each strand perfectly curled and dark and smooth like a Ghirardelli goddess
her familiar brown eyes stare up at the ceiling

A sudden tug on my shirt halts me
I turn to see my best friend Elliot leaning against his desk
a new intensity in his brown eyes,
the type of serious expression I wouldn't have expected
in the eyes of the class jokester

"See that girl over there?" my friend said, pointing to my dream girl
My eyes widened and my breath drowned
For the girl who was the star of my dreams
Was about to be snatched by a boy I considered a brother

"I'm going to tell Ermentrude I like her," Elliot announced proudly
with more courage than fear

And now the boy who had saved me a seat at lunch everyday for a year
had officially crossed enemy lines

"So...what's your approach?" I asked, hoping it would be terrible
It was no longer in me to be noble
I would not let this dragon capture the maiden
I would raise my sword and fight

But maybe not to the death

By Ryan Garn
Age 14; Pioneer Middle School
Second Place: Tustin Branch Library
77

THE NIGHT SKY

A milky white sphere, the moon gleams bright,
In an ocean of darkness I gaze at its light.
Its brilliance entrances, its beauty I adore, it
Brings me bliss all the hearts in the world cannot store.
For it is a gem, nay, a priceless jeweled crown,
That we all can admire from here on the ground.
The way its radiance bestows upon me
Such a divine happiness of which I am not worthy.
The stars in the night sky, like sands on a beach, but
More precious than gold, and way out of reach.
Oh, how they twinkle like small blinking lights on a
car made of sky at dizzying heights.
I try to grasp them in my quivering hand,
So that I can place them in a delicate strand, and hang it up
o'er my bed and watch them sparkle with glee
and as I lay my head to rest, I let them go free.
And as they fly through the air to their home in that void,
I wave them goodbye, still overjoyed.
Because I can still see them, my own little friends,
And I'll know that they're mine, until the end.
I gaze at them, silent, from evening 'til dawn,
When the sun's rays erase them like a line that's been drawn.
I look up during the day, when the sky is light blue,
And I imagine stars hidden 'round the moon, shining true.
And when the moon is a pearl in a void of black,
I smile at it, and the moon smiles back.

By Tyler Im
Age 13; Pioneer Middle School
Third Place: Tustin Branch Library

VILLA PARK BRANCH LIBRARY

HER HANDS

Expression gives forth through the bodies' most touched member
It's not the heart, but one that maybe physically needed
Many at foot, one that guarantees appearance
Her hands.....well, now barely grasped through my own
Small notions of dreams set forth my remembrances of....

She moved gracefully, carefully
Precise wisps, of gentle extravagant movements
She always did the same rhythmical

Tap

...tap

...tap

while rehearsing usual driving patterns

Her twig like proportions maneuvered perfectly
Her right matched her left
Her left matched her right
They were both slightly spotted with a slight degree in color
Her painted nails gashed and spiffed with a usual brilliant red

Her hands were clay they shaped with action and care
Her hands touched my own
They will never touch my hands again
I feel her hands
I feel her love

By Brittany Smith
Age 15; Villa Park High School
First Place: Villa Park Branch Library

THE CASTLE IN THE SKY

Up and up and away!
They fly,
To that castle up in!
The sky.
Where the birds sing!
And the flowers dance!
And the deer prance!
And banquets are held!
At night.
Where they sleep in!
Gold beds
And bob!
Their heads
To music.
Where the trees!
Bear ripe fruit,
And the lakes!
Are of wine,
In that castle up in!
The sky.
Where all is heavenly!
Divine.
Up and up and away!
They fly,
To that castle up in!
The sky.
And always they leave us here
To die.

By Connor Witt
Age 13; Waldorf School of Orange County
Honorable Mention: Villa Park Branch Library

MOTHER

My mother's eyes are like two fireflies
glistening in the moonlit sky.
Her kiss is like a big blue wish.
Mother is nature's way of saying
"Hooray"

By Analyse Groton
Age 14; Oakridge Private School
Honorable Mention: Villa Park Branch Library

**WEST GARDEN GROVE
BRANCH LIBRARY**

THE RACE

His body was tense
It was anticipating the sound of the horn,
the horn that would allow him to
run from his fears
run from his pains
run like he never ran before.
then the sound of the horn blared in his ears
but he was already running
running like the wind
running like a boy running for his life.
He was blind
the world had become nothing more than a blur to him.
He was deaf
he no longer heard the echo that resonated from the crowd
cheering him on.
He could not feel pain
But he felt the pride swell in him
as he remembered how he had guaranteed his victory
telling the whole world of his greatness
he could smell success.
Then the finish line was in sight
And suddenly he could see,
but he was stunned at what he saw,
stunned as he heard the gasps from the crowd
stunned as he suddenly felt pain in his head
stunned as he tasted the bitterness of defeat.

By Ranil Weerackoon
Age 15; Pacifica High School
First Place: West Garden Grove Branch Library

ANCIENT

winding winds whisper in my ears whispering stories of ancient years
the twitching trees sway with the winds dancing the stories of ancient
sins bickering blue birds sit and sing arguing stories of ancient kings
rapid rabbits race all around echoing voices of ancient sound snaking
stream slide along their paths reflecting images of ancient wrath
squeaking squirrels swim, frolic, and play mimicking the ancient,
Flower May winding winds whine within my drums nature's trees were
lost, replaced by slums silver streams stop their a-flowing squirrels,
rabbits no longer a-growing friend, foe? Flower May came to stay the
lands, like olden sheep, put to stray foes fast forget, the beauty Earth
forgotten, the only part of worth

By Bethany Lettiere
Age 16; Pacifica High School
Second Place: West Garden Grove Branch Library

FLAMES

For as it billows high
With its attempts to reach the sky

Seemingly dancing off this log
It burns proud and strong

And with nothing left to hide
It gives off this light

Which illuminates the dark
And erases all the marks

Of what was seen as true
So all can start anew

By David Matalon
Age 16; Pacifica High School
Third Place: West Garden Grove Branch Library

WESTMINSTER BRANCH LIBRARY

UNCHANGING FEELINGS

The soft noise of the rainy weather,
It *cools* you down.
It makes you forget of your troubles.
You don't need to *worry*,
The rain tells you.
Relax.
Don't think about the world right now.
It never thinks of you.
You sit quietly against the window pane
With one leg propped up,
The other hanging by the floor.
No worries.
You chuckle,
As if.
You close your eyes anyway
And lean further onto the window.
The rain is the only thing you hear.
It starts to consume you, like a lullaby.
Drifting off to sleep,
Your muscles unwind.
Your mind closes off.
The room turns a dark, soft blue,
Like a blanket that covers your entire body.
It covers your entire being,
And you rest.
This feels *nice*.
A *smile* slips onto your mouth.
I could get used to this.
Then you dream,
Dream of *nothing* but the soft noise of the rainy weather.

By Valentine Dang
Age 14; Stacey - Clegg School
First Place: Westminster Branch Library

BEING HUMAN

the Heart is liberty the Mind is cruelty
emotion deep in the thought thought deep in the emotion
love controls the quick beginning but only pain remains in the slow ending
revolution becomes a part of the good stagnation becomes a part of the evil
acting on the will of tamed thought thinking of the ideas in rash action
believing the goals of the wrong doubting the morals of the right
feeling the power of thought Soul seeing the power of emotion
gain the best of the world lose the most in the soul
exploits of the weak body failure of the robust spirit
find passion in the dark find remorse in the light
the soft inner truth the hard outer lies
come together for a being
a person is born
the result is
Life

By Thinh Le
Age 16; La Quinta High School
Second Place: Westminster Branch Library

FALLING

Taking a stroll I tripped and fell
Got up, but my chest was an empty shell
It must be a thief, something was stolen
But my head was still throbbing and swollen
Something in my stomach was fluttering
A little voice in my head was muttering
All the lights seemed to be brighter
And I no longer wanted to be a fighter
I was compelled to listen to sappy songs
I couldn't concentrate on one thing for long
This happens when you're under a boulder
Or when you start to get a little older
This is when the fruits of love are lush
This is what you call a crush

By Huy Pham
Age 17; La Quinta High School
Third Place: Westminster Branch Library

**OC PUBLIC LIBRARIES
BRANCH LOCATIONS**

Aliso Viejo

One Journey
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656
949-360-1730

Brea

1 Civic Center Circle
Brea, CA 92821-5784
714-671-1722

Costa Mesa

1855 Park Avenue
Costa Mesa, CA 92627
949-646-8845

Costa Mesa/Mesa Verde

2969 Mesa Verde Drive East
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
714-546-5274

Costa Mesa Technology

3033 Bristol St, Suite Q
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
714-754-4431

Cypress

5331 Orange Avenue
Cypress, CA 90630
714-826-0350

Dana Point

33841 Niguel Road
Dana Point, CA 92629
949-496-5517

El Toro

24672 Raymond Way
Lake Forest, CA 92630
949-855-8173

Foothill Ranch

27002 Cabriole Way
Foothill Ranch, CA. 92610
949-855-8072

Fountain Valley

17635 Los Alamos Street
Fountain Valley, CA 92708
714-962-1324

Garden Grove/Chapman

9182 Chapman Avenue
Garden Grove, CA 92841
714-539-2115

Garden Grove Regional

11200 Stanford Avenue
Garden Grove, CA 92840
714-530-0711

Garden Grove/West

11962 Bailey Street
Garden Grove, CA 92845
714-897-2594

Irvine/Heritage Park

14361 Yale Avenue
Irvine, CA 92604
949-936-4040

Irvine/Katie Wheeler

13109 Old Myford Rd
Irvine, CA. 92602

Irvine/University Park

4512 Sandburg Way
Irvine, CA 92612
949-786-4001

La Habra

221 E. La Habra Boulevard
La Habra, CA 90631
714-526-7728; 562-694-0078

La Palma

7842 Walker Street
La Palma, CA 90623
714-523-8585

Ladera Ranch

29551 Sienna Parkway
Ladera Ranch, CA 92694
949-234-5940

Laguna Beach

363 Glenneyre Street
Laguna Beach, CA 92651
949-497-1733

Laguna Hills Technology

25555 Alicia Parkway
Laguna Hills, CA 92653
949-707-2699

Laguna Niguel

30341 Crown Valley Parkway
Laguna Niguel, CA 92677
949-249-5252

Los Alamitos/Rossmoor

12700 Montecito Road
Seal Beach, CA 90740
562-430-1048; 714-846-3240

Orangetown Children's Home

Open to Residents only

Rancho Santa Margarita

30902 La Promesa
Rancho Santa Margarita, CA
92688
949-459-6094

San Clemente

242 Avenida Del Mar
San Clemente, CA 92672
949-492-3493

San Juan Capistrano

31495 El Camino Real
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
949-493-1752

Seal Beach/Mary Wilson

707 Electric Avenue
Seal Beach, CA 90740
562-431-3584; 714-840-6759

Silverado

PO Box 535
28192 Silverado Canyon Road
Silverado, CA 92676
714-649-2216

Stanton

7850 Katella Avenue
Stanton, CA 90680
714-898-3302

Tustin

345 East Main Street
Tustin, CA 92780
714-544-7725

Villa Park

17865 Santiago Boulevard
Villa Park, CA 92861
714-998-0861

Westminster

8180 13th Street
Westminster, CA 92683
714-893-5057

**Visit our web site at
www.ocpl.org**

Index

A.C.C.E.S.S. Independent Study, 10
Aliso Niguel High School, 6
Anauri, Daniel, 56
Anderson, Amber, 5
Anonymous, 36
Arnold O. Beckman High School, 38
Auer, Mandy, 22
Baine, Ryan, 64
Brea Olinda High School, 7, 9
Bunn, Maryellis, 51
Bussell, King Solomon, 13
Cabassa, Ashley, 73
Capo Beach Calvary Junior High School, 19, 20, 49, 54, 65, 66, 69, 70
Castellanos, Marina, 4
Chadwick School, 71
Char, Sydney, 71
Christ Lutheran School, 15
Corona del Mar High School, 13
Costa Mesa High School, 14, 61
Cudmore, Danielle, 52
Dana Hills High School, 56
Dang, Valentine, 85
Do, Phi, 16
Don Juan Avila Middle School, 4
El Toro High School, 24
Espino, Montserrat, 2
Espinoza, Caleb, 7
Espinoza, Hector, 31
Flores, Edgar, 75
Foja, Desiree, 45
Fu, Katherine, 40
Garn, Ryan, 77
Gonzalez, Anthony, 43
Gonzalez, Lisa, 23
Green, Christina, 6
Groton, Analyse, 81
Guarjardo, Tori, 54
Gujardo, Tessia, 19
Guo, Tiffany, 38
Henson, Rachel L., 10
Hillberg, Amy, 27
Homeschool, 36
HOPE Christina School, 8
Im, Tyler, 78
Imperial Middle School, 44
Irvine High School, 33, 34
Jason, Gianna, 15
John F. Kennedy High School, 45, 46, 47
Johnson, Tara, 25
Kreit, Zoe, 58
Kushi, Ryan, 47
La Quinta High School, 29, 32, 86, 87
Laguna Beach High School, 50, 51, 52
Laguna Hills High School, 53
Lang, Alex, 8
Le, Thinh, 86
Leavell, Justine, 24
Lettiere, Bethany, 83
Leung, Elice, 33
Lilly, Nathan, 65
Lippincott, Danielle, 72
Los Alisos Middle School, 22, 23
Mackintosh, Alexandra, 42
Magnolia High School, 75
Mananghaya, Katalina, 68
Matalon, David, 84
Mataya, Briana, 63

McAuliffe Middle School, 17, 72
 McGrade, Katie, 26
 Mckown, Alyssa, 21
 Mellinger, Kyle, 48
 Mojadad, Ida, 9
 Mountain View School, 48
 Nance, Joshua, 69
 New Vista School, 67
 Nguyen, Angie, 32
 Nguyen, Patrick, 28
 Nichols, Elizabeth, 59
 Oakridge School, 81
 Oelerich, Sajel, 37
 Olvera, Citlali, 11
 Orange County High School of the Arts, 27, 57
 Ornelas, Paloma, 12
 Ostmann, Julia, 57
 Oxford Academy, 16, 18
 Pacific Coast High School, 59
 Pacifica High School, 73, 74, 82, 83, 84
 Padayao, Annie, 50
 Pham, Huy, 87
 Pioneer Middle School, 37, 77, 78
 Rafferty, Caitlin, 20
 Ralston Intermediate School, 11
 Rancho Alamitos High School, 12
 Ray, Savannah, 66
 Reskey, Daniel, 14
 Roberts, Lucas, 55
 Rodriguez, Guillermina, 53
 Ryan, Colleen, 46
 Sage Hill School, 58
 Salido, Talia, 44
 Salmon, Marina, 61
 Santa Margarita High School, 64
 Santiago High School, 30, 31
 Silverado High School, 62
 Smith, Brittany, 79
 Sonora High School, 42, 43
 South Lake Middle School, 35
 St. Barbara School, 28
 St. Edwards School, 5, 21, 55, 68
 Stacey-Clegg School, 85
 Suarez, Gaby, 2
 Sutherland, Amy, 62
 Taylor, Indigo, 67
 Tesoro High School, 63
 Ton, Thucdan, 18
 Trabuco Hills High School, 25, 26
 Tran, Aileen, 29
 Tran, Julie, 30
 Trujillo, Rubi, 74
 University High School, 39, 40, 41
 Utt Middle School, 76
 Van De Walker, Kirk, 60
 Veritas Christian Academy, 60
 Villa Park High School, 79
 Waldorf School of Orange County, 80
 Walsh, Rose, 49, 70
 Webster, Hannah, 34
 Weerackoon, Ranil, 82
 White, Nancy, 76
 Witt, Connor, 80
 Xu, Hope, 39
 Xu, Jeff, 41
 Yeh, Benjamin, 17
 Zeng, Chuli (Regina), 35