

Tree and Me

Trees and Me, Always Learning
Getting Smart

Trees and Me, Making Wood
Giving Shade and Furniture a Start

Trees and Me, Feel the Wind
Growing and Drawing all the Sun

Trees and Me, Feel the Texture
My Skin and His Bark

Trees and Me, Always Changing,
Day by Day and Night by Night.

Aarav

First Place, Kindergarten

Things that Wait

There are memories beneath my bed.
Crumpled drawings from wild crayon to neutral pencil,
And pictures that have fallen from the walls.
Ones I haven't bothered to put back up.
Versions of myself stare back at me,
Like they expect to hear about change.

Dust settles on them evenly-
No favorites.
I like that about dust.

There are sneakers lying by the door,
I feel older than my calendar claims.
In the way shoes feel older
As they learn the shape of your feet.
They stay there, creased at the toes,
Still holding yesterday in their soles.

My shoes know who I've been and where I've been.
I pretend I don't.
The people I am are stuck in a hallway.
They pass each other and don't speak.

My computer is full of drafts
That never learned how to end.
Stories that started with once upon a time, bold and brave,
Always trail off into white space.
The motivation was lost in classes.
I keep the drafts anyway.
I still write, but the drafts are proof.
That once upon a time I brought my ideas to life,
I named things before they moved on.

I move the sticks out of my path as I walk
Because of memories from brighter days.
"Small acts of kindness in a big world,"
Like straightening a picture frame in someone else's house.

There was writing on one of the bathroom stalls,
Conversations with strangers through Sharpie.
"Trust the process."
Underneath someone scrawled, "If there is a process."
I decided to make that my motto.

The sun shines through the window when I clean my room,
And I find the pictures that fell months, or maybe years ago.
I pick one up and pin it on the wall again.
Nothing changes really.
Drafts stay drafts and the drawings keep their dust.

But my sneakers are on and the sidewalk is clear,
That feels close enough
To an ending
To count.

Afsheen
First Place, Sixth Grade

Blue

Blue is a waterfall,
And Neptune,
And the feeling of a cozy sweater.

Blue is the taste of Sour Patch Kids,
And the smell of cake.
Blue makes me feel happy.

It is the sound of flowers,
Blue is a tent,
And the Sky.
Blue is one of my favorite colors.

Aize

Third Place, First Grade

Arepa

Arepa rica y divina
Frita con mantequilla
Con carne que vale oro
Redonda y amarilla ya parece el sol,
Con una malta parece que estoy en Venezuela.
Con reina pepiada sabe espectacular
Y arepa dulce lo comes cuando tienes pesadumbre
Y 5 minutos después dices pardiez.

Arepa

A delicious, divine arepa—
Fried in butter,
Filled with meat worth its weight in gold.
Round and yellow, it looks just like the sun;
With a malt drink, it feels as though I'm in Venezuela.
With Reina Pepiada filling, it tastes spectacular;
And a sweet arepa is just the thing to eat when you're feeling down—
And five minutes later, you exclaim, "Good heavens!"

Andrés

Honorable Mention, Fifth Grade

Don't Waste the Food

I eat watermelon and chicken before it gets bad.
Don't let the food go rotten, as food will get mad.
Bock Bock Bock (chicken sounds)

Aria

First Place, Kindergarten

My Parents

My parents are good
They cook me food
My parents are small
They want me to be tall
My parents are the best
Even though they make me get dressed

Arjun
First Place, First Grade

Book Light

Under the cover,
Book light shining.
Like a beacon,
Helping me forge a path
Into the fantastical,
Mystical,
Stories.

Soaring through the pages
Like a bird.

Under the covers,
I became a spectator
To Tom Robinson's Trial.

Under the covers,
I became a contestant
In the great
Tri-Wizard Tournament.

Under the cover,
I search for stories to bring me
Happiness,
Sadness,
And the truth,
Under the cover
With my Book Light.

Arlo
Third Place, Fifth Grade

Asking You

Can cats get cramped
Do dogs doubt
Ever saw an electric elephant
Ever saw a squid sense sadness
Can bears bare boredom

Bea

Honorable Mention, Fifth Grade

Art

The paint goes splash!
The paint brush goes swish swish.

Blen
Honorable Mention, Kindergarten

《深夜的微光》
漫漫黑夜，
闪烁起细碎的光芒。
喔，原来是萤火虫呀。

In the Dark Night

In the dark night
Twinkle lights are
Firefly

***Boren
Honorable Mention, Fourth Grade***

The Ocean

Waves crash against the shore
Seafoam blankets the sand
A cool breeze blows my hair
Pushing the heat of the summer away
The smell of salt is in the air
Wafting into everyone's noses
The water reflects the light of the sun
Making everything blindingly bright
Birds land on the water
In need of food and rest
Dolphins jump out of the waves
Before diving back into the depths
Whales breach with elegance
And make a deafening splash
People run around on the beach
Looking for shells and rocks
They gaze out at the seemingly infinite ocean
Which stretches out before them
They wonder what is out there
Because nobody truly knows

Caroline
First Place, Fifth Grade

Soccer

A soccer ball resting,
On the field, round,
Ready to get kicked,
Silent...
The players,
Joyful, sweaty,
Ready to play,
In the dirty locker rooms.
When the game starts,
The ball looks faster than lightning.
When the game ends,
The ball resting again,
Ready to roll.

Diego
Third Place, Fourth Grade

A Bird Family in Alewife

Over in Alewife Brook Reservation
Our bird family wakes with the morning sun

My little brother is a Blue Jay
Hair sticking up every morning
Flashing bright blue as he runs through the day

When I put on my black sneakers
With yellow and red lightning stripes,
I became a Red-winged Blackbird
Wings stretched wide with excitement
Feeling like I could lift into the sky

My mom was a Swan in her wedding photo
Now she says she's just a Mama Mallard—
Busy, a little messy, hurrying us along
But I know she's still a swan—
The most beautiful bird to me

One day on our walk, we saw a Canada Goose
Flapping its wings and honking loud
Protecting its little goslings
Just like my dad—
Strong and steady, keeping our family safe

Over the brook, beneath the wide sky
Different feathers, different songs
We fly side by side, together

And when the day is done
We come back to our nest
Where we belong

A Bird Family in Alewife

신이준

Alewife Brook Reservation 위로
아침 해와 함께 깨어나는 우리 가족

내 동생은 Blue Jay
아침마다 머리카락이 삐죽삐죽
파란 날개를 반짝이며 하루종일 뛰어다녀요

노랑 빨강 무늬 검정 운동화를 신으면

나는 Red-winged Blackbird가 돼요
두 날개를 활짝 펴면 하늘로 날아오를 것 같아요

결혼 사진 속 엄마는 우아한 백조인데
엄마는 지금 딱 엄마 오리가 되었대요
늘 바쁘고 정신없이 우리를 재촉하시지만
내 눈에 엄마는 여전히 세상에서 가장 아름다운 백조예요

어느 날 산책길에 만난, 아기 거위들을 지키러
날개를 펼럭이며 꺹꺹 소리 지르던 아빠 캐나다 구스처럼
우리 아빠도 늘 우리 가족을 든든하게 지켜주시죠

시냇물 위로, 넓은 하늘 아래
서로 다른 깃털, 서로 다른 노래
우리는 나란히, 함께 날아가요

그리고 하루가 저물면
우리는 돌아와요
우리 가족만의 따뜻한 둥지로

Ejoon “EJ”
First Place, Second Grade

Dripping off a Cone

I see your cute brown eyes shining
I remember your silly laughter, a melody I still hear
I loved when you were happy

But then something happened that
Shocked my heart like an earthquake
You were gone
The type of gone where I could not hug you
Or help you when you're sad
But the type of gone where you were not here anymore

And when I heard that, I crawled up on my bed as if I were
A fox that was freezing
Without no one by their side

I know you are resting in a better place
But you left me so soon that my life is
Like an ice cream that's dripping off a cone
On a hot summer day

Elany
Second Place, Fifth Grade

Once, I Told a Cardinal to Sing Me a Song

Once,
I told a Cardinal to sing me a song.
She did not sing.

Two times,
I told a Blue Jay
To be quieter.
He did not listen.

Three times,
I told a Cedar Waxwing,
If he could just stay still for
Just a few seconds.
He did not listen.

Many times,
I stood far away from a Sparrow,
Hoping for her to come nearer,
She didn't get the message.

But every time
I looked at birds,
With wonder in my eyes,
A dangling sense of freedom
Hung in my heart
As they flew away
Into the endless,
Vast sky.

Eleanor "Elly"
Honorable Mention, Fifth Grade

Books

There are books about dragons
Books about castles, books about Science and
Books about apples. There are Atlases
Dictionaries and biographies too. There are
Fiction, adventure, and How-to. You can read
Books about languages like Spanish, French and
Chinese. You could read books about the
Human body and what happens when
Somebody sneezes. So go to the library
And pick out a book because there
Are so many kinds, just take a look.

Elise

First Place, Third Grade

Ocean Sounds

Ocean waves
Crashing on the shore
Fish jumping
Seals splashing
Sharks thrashing
Kids dashing
Beautiful sounds
Oh, Ocean, I love you

Fort
Second Place, Second Grade

The Creepy House

Tip, tip, tip goes the floor
Creak goes the door
Slam goes the kitchen
I hope it's not a chicken

Hanael
Honorable Mention, Second Grade

My Toy

When I was a baby one month old my mom got me a toy.
I didn't know the toy was my favorite toy even now, when I was a baby one month old.
I was joy. I was joy.
I love it. I love it.
Got it. Got it.

Harry
Third Place, Kindergarten

Stingrays

Stingrays
Flat, funny
Staring, gliding, laying
Fins, tail, eyes, mouth
Colorful diamond
Ray

Itanya
Second Place, First Grade

Caged

Confined in a space,
Locked up in a case.
Society laughs with vigor.
They click their tongue,
At my itsy bitsy cage.
The bar
rier of my own confinement,
Defined like a block of swiss cheese
Defined the holes and im perfections
Always with the mis
conceptions Never the true pic tu re.
Stuck Of mor tal suf in im this sp ace,
Society change will never fering,
As they shining gawk at the iron blind,
I stay in this plane of subliminal ache.
The fade But then, laughs
They realize They realize fully
are with me stuck in this cage They
cage In a bigger cage Still a
Now they are the ones
Confined in the space
Locked up in a case
And now I am laughing at their trapped state.
Never remembering
The torment I had endured
Now they are the ones basking
In the torment
Of the cage.
Why must this cycle repeat?
Why must this cycle?
Why must?
Why?
The cycles have repeated.

Kriman
Third Place, Eighth Grade

My Bike

My bike
His name is Mr. Spike.
He rolls through the grass
As we ride home from class.

He loves to race
And feel the cool breeze on his face,
Over the hills
And past the mills.

In spring,
He takes me to swing,
When flowers are in bloom
And bees go zoom.

And that's why I love Mr. Spike.

Kurian
Honorable Mention, First Grade

The Cat

I am majestic
I see it all
You humans are so blind
I can smell a mile away
You cannot even smell yourself
I can fly to the treetops
While you can barely stand
I can stalk a tiny mouse
For dinner
While you must employ
Pointy sticks
I can catch you, human
I am not blind
I can see you, human
So, you better be aware

Lucy
Second Place, Fourth Grade

L'amour

Pum-pum-pum.
Lo miro por mirarlo.
Pum-Pum-Pum.
¿Qué es esto?
Pum-Pum-Pum.
Es una conga en mi pecho.
Pum-Pum-Pum.
Lo miro con cuidado.
Pum-Pum-Pum.
Lo quiero sin saberlo.
Tic-Tac-Tic-Tac.
El tiempo pasa rápido.
Pum-Pum-Pum.
Me apuro en alejarme.
Pum.

Thump-thump-thump.
I look at him just to look.
Thump-thump-thump.
What is this?
Thump-Thump-Thump.
It's a conga drum in my chest.
Thump-Thump-Thump.
I look at him carefully.
Thump-Thump-Thump.
I love him without knowing it.
Tick-Tock, Tick-Tock.
Time passes quickly.

Thump-Thump-Thump.
I hurry to pull away.
Thump.

Marina
Second Place, Sixth Grade

El Estrés

Algunos días
El estrés camina hacia ti
Y no sabes que va a llegar.

Es como una tinta oscura
Pintando de negro
En el papel blanco.

Tu mente
Se convierte
En un ciclo de ideas exageradas
Que nunca van a pasar.

La tensión
Crece a ser una enredadera
Circulando, acumulando
Y sacando aire de tus pulmones.

Un oído frenético
Llegando más y más cerca
Hasta que no puedes pensar
Claramente.

Algunos días
El estrés camina hacia ti
Puedes superarlo.

Stress

Some days
Stress walks toward you,
And you don't know it's coming.

It is like dark ink,
Painting black
Across white paper.

Your mind
Turns into
A cycle of exaggerated thoughts
That will never come to pass.

Tension
Grows into a creeping vine—
Circling, accumulating,
And stealing the air from your lungs.

A frantic sound
Drawing closer and closer,
Until you can no longer think
Clearly.

Some days,
Stress walks toward you—
But you can overcome it.

Maya
Third Place, Fifth Grade

Ode to Spring

Sitting under a cherry blossom tree at the park,
Feet stretched out on the dewy morning grass.
Take a moment to look up.
Happiness falls over me seeing silhouettes of robins,
Soaring in front of the glistening sun.
The comforting breeze lands on my shoulder,
Creating a symphony of nature.
The agreeable tulips bend for the gentle wind
In the warm spring air.
Petals of pink fly,
Landing on puddles in uneven rocks,
That light up in the sun.
There are people walking eager dogs,
Stopping frequently to smell everything that was
Covered by a blanket of snow.
Freshly awaking flowers turn their petals
To the sun, delighted to start a new year.
People set up picnic blankets,
And grab cold club sandwiches from their cooler.
This time of year brings everyone together
To embrace the beauty of spring.

Miles
First Place, Fifth Grade

Fly away Home

Fourth grade
And nine years old,
On my bed
As I stare out towards the crowd
An invisible microphone in hand.
The velvet red curtains open up.

I grew up at rehearsals, a script in hand,
Relied on “maybe,” on hopes, impossible to diminish, the light of a firefly and the echo
That line you can’t forget, even though, some days,
You want to.

Maybe it’s because this world hurts. And that line felt like it held the world’s hand, and
As you said it, you did the same, dancing in time with the beat, with your own heart,
And you lose touch with why you came here. You came to forget,
And right now, all you can feel is the dull pain of
Remembering.

Feel the breeze in your hair. Feel that strong heart beat its own rhythm.
Do what you know to do. Fly away home,
Past the shadows
Past the North star that haunts you.
For once, taste that freedom, let it melt on your tongue, vanilla ice cream in summer.
Don’t forget, though,
So that when your feet grow sore, your voice raspy, your heart longing
For something *real*, you won’t be afraid to come back.

Like my first director told us before each performance,
There is magic in the theater.
“Sit back, relax, and enjoy the show.”
For the first, and the last, time, I feel the spotlight against my skin, and the world is
Mine.

And when you take the last bow that night, remember how you got there.

Myra
First Place, Eighth Grade

Me

Me is me
I love me

Me is a boy or me is a girl
Me is old or me is small
Or me is in the middle
And me would be loved forever

Nara

Third Place, First Grade

I Am From

I am from the pothos that needs cutting.
I am from my Nantucket Fog colored first floor of a triple decker.
I am from creaky wooden floors.

I am from the way the fireflies shine like fairy lights in the sky.
I am from the pink and white flowers of Gnolie.
I am from watching the Olympics in Grandma's old house.
I am from drippy Dairy Queen cones in hot weather.

I am from camping in the living room in 2020.
I am from Friday pizza.
I am from empanadas on Christmas Eve.
I am from the hikes around Walden Pond on January 1st.

I am from organized spaces with Ikea bins.
I am from "love you"s and "team in"s.
I am from "holy cow" and "puzzlers gotta puz."

I am from Northampton, Massachusetts.
I am from Cooley Dickinson Hospital.

I am from Ecuador and the U.S.A.

I am from turkey meatballs and Grandma's pesto.
I am from stories of being under the ginkgo tree at Smith College.
I am from hot to the touch Mold-A-Ramas from Brookfield Zool.
I am from lavender scented Bed-Buddies.

I am from the way the fire crackles up the long driveway on Sarles Lane.
I am from the large rubber tree plant at my grandma's house on Holworthy Street.
I am from sandwiches out of P.B. Boulangerie's ovens in Wellfleet.
I am from Grandma's grilled cheese.
I am from my Aunt Monica who taught me how to needle felt.
I am from my Uncle Andy who tells me about trees.
I am from little Guinevere with all her adventures.
I am from Grandma, the one with the green thumb.
I am from Abuela, who isn't with us but still in our hearts.

I am from Mama and Mami.
I am from all the love and care in my life.

Olivia
First Place, Fourth Grade

Concrete Poem (Drip Drop)

Drip
Drop plip plop
Drops jump up
Fall down from petals
The seed blown in
Dirt. Growing growing
To a flower it
Dies dies dies
To a fruit or vegetable.

Roots
Go down
Down
Down
Into
The
Garden
Ground
Down
And

Down to
Almost 1,000,000 feet.

***Olympia
Second Place, Kindergarten***

Death

Palestine is slowly dying
Children starving
People dying
Schools getting bombed

Palestine is demolishing
Day to Day people
Will think Palestine

Is a grain of sand
That...

Happened

Otilia
Third Place, Fourth Grade

When I Dream

When I dream,
All the unpleasant parts of me join hands
And spread out across my body
To make me
Heavy
My friends all know
They hear the
Tick, tick, tick
Of a bomb ready to blow
The scenarios are grim:
I lose my cat
I lose my friends
I lose my composure
It could happen in real life, too
If I'm not careful,
So it weighs me down.

When I dream,
All the lovely parts of me join hands
And spread out across my body
To make me
Light
I am a new creation
I only feel the
Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh
Of the wind that heals a nation
My life is seamless:
I gain joy
I gain my independence
I gain my wings
It could happen in real life, too
And I'll be waiting
For it to lift me up

Piet
Third Place, Seventh Grade

Spring

Animals wake up from winter
They go find food
They see the sun
And the non-icy lakes
The frogs swim and lay eggs
Birds, they chirp and sing
And make new nests for their eggs
Squirrels, they look for acorns to eat
And the snow is melting.

Pol
First Place, Third Grade

Oops!

It was a Sunday
Not a Monday,
And I was in my room.
In my room, sitting on a mat
Trying to crochet a hat
I looked down at my creation
Without any elation
Because it was much too small!
And that is why,
My reader,
The Teddy Bear has a hat.

Rebecca
Third Place, Fourth Grade

The Rem-eddy from the Chef

I'm made up of exploring the world and jamming to positivity.
I'm from the calm swish of nature, I'm from the sereness of home.
I am from the opening notes of "Underdog,"
Looking at the sky, while seeing the world laid out, calms me.
I am hanging out in the backyard with my bro,
Tossing a frisbee,
And laughing so hard,
It feels like we are birds, soaring high with carefree joy,
Our wings wide open, catching the sun,
Making our bodies radiate with joy.
I'm made up of not giving up
And following my heart.
I am from the confidence of learning my culture
Practicing Spanish, reading as warm hands braid -
Shea, coconut, and castor -
The love ingrained like the roots of the tree trunk.
I am made up
Of an awesome family
Reece,
Mama,
And Mommy.
When I can dance in the sunlight through my window,
Or smell the creativity in sauteed corn,
I am lifted up, by invisible hands
To the world that awaits for me to live.
I am from glory and truth!
From strength and confidence.
When I rise,
Like Maya Angelou,
Like Alicia Keys,
Like Angela Davis,
Like Ketanji Onyika Brown Jackson,
And all the others that paved a path for me
To be here,
I bring with me my supercharged smile.
To share my positivity, confidence, and kindness.
I bring with me an open heart and mind,
So I can learn to spin stories too.
Where I'm from tells a story.
Something that is more than words
Because of the millions of threads
Who have woven themselves in through the pages in my book.
If you look closely, you can see me learning how to play
On the basketball courts behind our house
The joy of being lifted up and dunking
With my little hands.
It is made up of hiking in the Rockies,
Carrying heavy Cotopaxi bags,
Seeing crystal clear glacial lakes,
Of hearing "If you work hard,
Great things will come."
Over
And

O
V
E
R

Again.

I am the burnt reds, deep sky blues, and vivid greens of my neighborhood.

I am from family cooking

Enchiladas verdes,

Handcrafted passed-down-from-long-ago-latkes,

That take taste buds to a party.

I am from cicho bądź and usiąść

From my great grandmother traveling to the U.S. when she was

16, by boat,

Seeking safety, and a better future.

I am from an enslaved great-great aunt and Cook Island,

The people who made it possible for me to be here,

Who made impressions under oppression, who

Fought back so the next generation could do more than just walk –

They could fly.

I am from being a sneakerhead,

From loving my style.

Picking out fresh kicks for the start of school,

Waiting for delivery day to peel back the box

And smell that good new shoe smell.

I am from learning footwork skills,

I love the sound of my cleats tapping the ball.

Feeling free as I chase my dreams around the field.

I am from opening Christmas presents first thing,

I am from homemade pancakes,

I am from reading fifteen books over the summer,

I am from hand-crafted cards,

Thoughtful presents,

Celebrating 13 meaningful birthdays.

I'm made up of exploring the world and jamming to positivity.

I'm made up of exploring the world and jamming to positivity.

I'm from the calm swish of nature, I'm from the serenity of home.

I am from the opening notes of "Underdog,"

I am Remi.

Remi

Second Place, Seventh Grade

The Elegant Cat

The elegant cat
Snores beautifully
She dances with the wind
Happiness comes to her

Rio
Third Place, Second Grade

Idiocy

There was a boy I did not like.
Some sauce of soy is on my mic.
He put it there, I'm sure he did.
From who knows where, I know he hid.
But here's a cup of soy sauce. Why?
I stood right up and hit it! Sigh...

Rowan
Second Place, Fifth Grade

Nature

Nature is...beautiful...
Peaceful and quiet.
River animals splashing
In the cool water. I
Watch them on a
Clean dock breathing
In the forest.

Ruby
Honorable Mention, Second Grade

How to Write a Poem

A rhyme is quite elusive -
It must be clear and unobtrusive,
And a poet simply can't
Fall victim to the slant;
The syllables must always fit, and pour smoothly from the tongue,
For on clunky and confusing lines a reader oft gets hung.
A rhyme scheme will make time seem to disappear within the jumble
Of As and Bs and Cs that tease and tangle, twist and tumble.
And once one is done looking for mistakes so microscopic,
They must verify they've not terrified away the perfect topic.
These are not small obstacles, but if you've got the strength to go em',
The guts, the grit – but mostly wit,
You'll make the perfect poem.

Sam

First Place, Seventh Grade

My Mammani is Always Here

My Mammani is always here
Never left me,
I seek new ways to know her,
Sometimes I feel her,
Through the gusting wind,
My Mammani is always here,
I might not see her,
But I know she is next to me
She sways around watching the world
Keeping us safe
My Mammani is always here,
Sometimes she visits me through gracious flower
She doesn't leave
My Mammani is always here
I can't always know she's around me,
But the feeling I have is
Deep and truthful,
My Mammani is around me
Even when she isn't.
Because...
My Mammani is always here.

Sara
Honorable Mention, Fourth Grade

More Than What You See

On the first day of school
They gave me a name tag
Like that was enough to explain me.
Just a sticker.
Just a name.
Just a space to fit into.

But I'm not "just" anything.

I wrote my name the way my mom says it
Slow and sure
Because it matters.
Because it's mine.

Before I even said a word,
People made up their minds.
They saw my face
And filled in the blanks.
They heard my voice
And decided what it meant.

They thought they knew me.
They thought they knew me.
They thought they knew me.

But they didn't.

In history class,
We read about protests and power,
About voices that refused to be quiet,
About people who kept walking
Even when the road was rough and uneasy.

We talk about fairness
Like it's simple.
Like it's easy.
Like everyone gets the same start.

But that's not always true.

Sometimes life feels like a race
Where some people have smooth sneakers
And some people are running on rocks.
Some people cheered on.
Some people are questioned.

Identity isn't something
You leave at the door.
It's in the way I talk,
The music I play,
The food my family makes on weekends.
It's in the loud laughter at my house,
The strong stories my grandparents tell.

My friend's name gets said wrong
Again and again,
Like it's too hard to learn.
It's just a small mistake, people say.
But small things add up.
Small things stick.

Another friend walks into stores
With his shoulders stiff,
Acting smaller than he is,
Because being noticed
Can feel dangerous.

That's not fair.
It's not fair.
It's not fair.

Social justice isn't just a big phrase
We underline in our notes.
It's paying attention.
It's speaking up when a joke goes too far.
It's listening when someone tells you
Their story doesn't match yours.

It's choosing to care,
Even when it's uncomfortable.

I'm more than what you see at first glance.
More than a stereotype.
That spreads like gossip.
More than assumptions
Stacked up like lockers in a hallway.

I'm made of different pieces
Confidence and confusion,
Culture and questions,
Mistakes and growth.

All of it matters.
All of it counts.
All of it is me.

So the next time someone asks who I am,
I won't hand them a sticker.
I won't shrink to fit their guess.

I'll stand there, steady and strong,
And let them know

I am the sum of every part of me.

Selah
Second Place, Eighth Grade

Broken Branches

Broken branches
Finally feel love
Calm clouds
Joyful birds
Me with you
So calm
together

Shems
Third Place, Second Grade

Blueprint

"Ourselves"
Ugh, that word again.
What, exactly,
Does it mean?
Because,
I thought it meant what it sounded like but clearly not.
You scream at me when my top is too short
And yell at me when my pants are too long.
You scowl when I wear foundation
But scoff when I just curl my lashes.
What, exactly,
Do you want me to be -
Who
Do you want me to be?
Because I know it's not the
Mixed race teenager who's too passionate about
"Stupid things"
Standing in front of you.
Who, exactly
Is the blueprint?
The standard?
Adam, Eve, this, that, him, her
Who chooses these rules,
Handpicks these stereotypes?
Your eyes can't be too small,
Body can't be too big,
And God forbid you have a different skin color.
How long will it take people to realize that we are not the minority,
But you are not
The majority.
You with the perfect body,
Tan skin,
Bleach blonde hair,
I will never be you,
Never achieve those goals,
Never complete those ab workouts gathering dust in my Pinterest boards
I guess,
That's a good thing?
If I give up chasing you, then
Maybe
I'll learn to be myself.
But how can I be myself with no teacher?
Who, exactly,
Is the blueprint?
Adam, Eve, this, that, him, her,
Who is
The
Standard?

Shireen
Third Place, Seventh Grade

Wren

I have a friend named Wren
He ate his own hen
And he likes to draw
With a pretty pen
And when he says “when”
He kisses Ken
And Ken is very zen
When she gets kissed by Wren
And Wren was only ten
When he kissed Ken
And he has a friend named Ben
Who ate Wren’s pen
And Wren now hates Ben
For eating his pen
And when everything stops,
It starts up again!

Siena
Third Place, Third Grade

Tongue

What happens when I stick my tongue out, and it wiggles and jiggles
And someone might do it back
I don't care, I swear, because it's just a silly thing, but I just do it anyway because I
know they're just trying to be silly.
I can touch it on my nose.
I spit it out like a hose but I know that I like it and it likes me
So if I fail this poem
I'll stick it out at me!

Soleil

Honorable Mention, First Grade

The Piano

Just waiting
Hour after hour
Day after day
Nobody came
Until one
Day the
Hands
Settled
Down

Soline
Second Place, Second Grade

To my Brother, Safir

My brother, Safir,
I love you very much.
I love the way your hair feels when I touch.
Full of curls, and tickles my finger.
Like seals, skin is soft and smooth.
When I sniff your hair,
It smells like shampoo mixed with air.
Sometimes, Safir, you're loud, and you scream.
Sometimes you're quiet like a mouse.
You have tanned skin, just like me,
With curly hair that is darker than the color of dark chocolate.
And your brown eyes, always smiling.
If I were to taste you, and trust me, I won't,
You'd be a sweet and sour pie.
You sometimes make me feel wonderful,
Sometimes annoyed, like a lion swatting a fly.
My brother, you are very convincing,
And I'm proud to be your sister.
Both of us, we like to watch TV and draw.
We have so much in common.
We have many differences too.
But I love you, no matter what.
And I'll know you love me back.

Sophie
Second Place, Fourth Grade

Orgullo Bilingüe

Tengo dos voces
Dos ríos que corren en mí,
Dos llaves que abren puertas
Donde otros ven muros.
En un idioma sueño
En otro me despierto,
Y entre los dos construyo puentes de viento.
No soy mitad soy doble, soy eco y raíz,
Soy canto que florece en más de un jardín
El bilingüismo es mi tesoro,
Con mi bandera invisible,
El orgullo no se esconde,
Fuerza que vive.
Ser bilingüe no es elegir,
Es sumar mundos,
Es mirar al horizonte
Y entenderlo en plural profundo.

Bilingual Pride

I have two voices,
Two rivers flowing within me;
Two keys that open doors
Where others see walls.
In one language I dream,
In another I wake;
And between the two, I build bridges of wind.
I am not half, I am double; I am echo and root,
I am a song that blooms in more than one garden.
Bilingualism is my treasure;
With my invisible flag,
My pride does not hide—
It is a living force.
To be bilingual is not about choosing;
It is about adding worlds,
It is about gazing at the horizon
And understanding it in the deepest plural.

***Sterline
Third Place, Sixth Grade***

Haití, Tierra de Luz Eterna

Haití, cuna del sol y del tambor,
Tus montañas cantan con voz de amor empeña,
El mar te abraza con brazos azules,
Y el viento baila entre tus palabras y nubes.

Tierra valiente, de alma encendida,
Forjaste tu historia y marcaste la vida.

De tus raíces brota el fuego,
De tus manos, el arte y el trueno.

Tus niños ríen, tu gente suena,
La esperanza florece y nunca se

Cada color en tu cielo pintado.
Cuenta un pasado fuerte y sagrado

Oh Haití, joya del caribe ardiente,
Orgullo del pueblo, espíritu valiente.

Tu ritmo es vida, tu suelo poesía,
Eres amor, eres fuerza, eres alegría
Sin cesar.

Haiti, Land of Eternal Light

Haiti, cradle of the sun and drum,
Your mountains sing with a voice of love;
The sea embraces you with azure arms,
And the wind dances amidst your words and clouds.

Your children laugh, your people resound;
Hope blossoms and is never dimmed;
Every color painted in your sky
Recounts a past both strong and sacred.

Brave land, with a soul aflame,
You forged your history and left your mark on life;
From your roots, fire springs forth,
And from your hands—art and thunder.

Oh Haiti, jewel of the ardent Caribbean,
Pride of the people, spirit of courage;
Your rhythm is life, your soil is poetry—
You are love, you are strength, you are ceaseless joy.

***Sterline
Third Place, Sixth Grade***

Cheese Burgers

When you're in my mouth you implode
And my taste buds explode.
Fries by the side, I open my mouth wide.
I put on the sauce, I just can't stop
I open my mouth wide
To taste a roller coaster of flavors.
The taste action is like the skill of the L.A. Lakers.
Those deep fried potatoes and that tomato are great.
And none of it I hate.
Yummm!

Theo
Second Place, Fourth Grade

A Day of my Turtle

Teddy took the turtle to the top of the ocean.
Teddy takes tacos to a tea shop.
The turtle ate ten tacos.
Turtle asked for more tomatoes.

***Theodore “Teddy”
Third Place, Kindergarten***

Arctic Fox

The snow falls on the silky white coat of the Arctic Fox
As they run, their fur flies out behind them
When they stop for a rest, they curl up
Two babies slip out to play
The black pack leader takes the baby
Back into the cuddle

Vera
First Place, Second Grade

The Lake of Wonders

Do you wonder where the best,
Most peaceful place to go is?
I know where to find it.
Around the biggest tower,
The largest land,
Right behind a tree
Is a place with a little white bench just big enough to fit you.
You can hear the birds singing,
The water rushing
As if it is rushing through your ears.
It is a place
Where you can let your worries float away into the water.
You can tell the lake all your crazy stories
Or your deepest secrets.
The faint sounds of squirrels
And chipmunks
Rushing to stock up for winter.
Everything is listening to you.
Your tears,
Your songs,
Your worries,
The lake is understanding
And ready to listen.
No matter if people think you are weird,
Don't listen to them.
Keep dreaming,
Having fun
And talking by the lake.
Beautiful trees
And plants
Make a little covering over your head.
You can take a moment to cry,
Take as long as your need.
Sit there for minutes,
Hours,
Even days.
Everything there will let
You be you.
The lake is the only one who can listen
To you and only you.
The lake of wonders.

Vivi
First Place, Fourth Grade

To the Moon

I got in a rocket ship,
And I flew to the moon.
I said, "Zip zip zip,"
And I landed in a lagoon.

Yihong
Second Place, Kindergarten

A Proud Red Bird

If I were a red bird,
My wings all made of fire

I would be the star of the show,
Leaving everyone to admire!

My neck as crimson
As royalty's cape,
Eating so much,
Very round is my shape.

Yes, I am
A pretty bird
Singing my song
'Til I feel heard

Yutong
Second Place, Third Grade