



**wood buffalo regional library**

# Words in Motion

**2023**



# Welcome to Words in Motion 2023



I am in awe of the creativity in our region! Thank you to everyone who submitted poems to the Wood Buffalo Regional Library's Words in Motion competition!

It is always a difficult, albeit pleasurable, task selecting the top 50 poems for our Words in Motion booklet. We live in a region with so much amazing talent.

Thank you to our amazing judges: Dawn Booth, Travis Hoyles, and Alisha Rajpura. We appreciate the time and effort you dedicated to the competition this year.

I would also like to acknowledge our supporters: NorthWord, Arts Council Wood Buffalo, Fort McMurray Public School Board, Fort McMurray Catholic School Board, and Northland School Division No. 61. Without your support, we would not be able to host this inspiring competition.

As Robert Frost once said, "Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found words." Thank you to everyone who has shared a piece of themselves through the beautiful words printed on these pages.

I hope you enjoy experiencing these words as much as I have.

**Corinna Pirie**  
Board Chair, Wood Buffalo Regional Library

# This World of Mine

Cadence Irmén

Silent sounds, quiet dreams,  
This softness is too loud for me.  
Is the past our future? Are the good times past?  
Why do slow days go so fast?  
What is wrong, what is right,  
What is anything in this world of mine?  
This world of mine seems too bright,  
When does darkness become too light?  
If dark is light and slow is fast,  
If wrong is right and good times are past,  
Even with these silent dreams,  
Nothing in this world is quiet, it seems.

# They were happy

## Sadie Rayne Antoine

I am happy. . .  
I am singing with my family and  
favourite people  
The deer prancing along our home  
The stars glittering across our globe  
Our stories carved among stone  
I am happy. . .  
Down the lake I hear two Loons  
I hear wolves howling at the moon  
Dangling from leaves are Cocoons  
I am happy. . .  
The fragrance of the flowers  
The passing of hours  
Oh, the community of ours  
I am happy. . .  
Then the first snow  
The sun glare glows  
The crow flying over the meadow  
I am happy. . .  
The stew was on the fire, the  
bannock was getting cooked  
Then a big bang, we all looked.  
A peaceful family, now all shook.  
Many white men crawl over the  
brook.  
I was taken away, along with my  
breath.  
I never until now had a fear of death  
My beautiful long hair was cut to  
length  
I was happy. . .  
I woke up, and was sad it wasn't a  
dream  
Desperately clinging to the beam for  
strength  
Yet my weak limbs gave up on me  
I was happy. . .  
They constantly called me words  
I tried to call help to the birds  
They made me constantly call them  
"sirs"  
I was happy. . .

My favourite clothing was ripped  
away  
We had to portray a white child's way  
We were forced to our scrawny  
knees to pray  
Some of my friends began to turn  
grey  
I was happy. . .  
I woke up to bad dreams one night in  
my nightgown  
It sounded like cries of the lone loon,  
or being struck down.  
But I wasn't allowed to turn the  
corner, I frowned.  
I was happy. . .  
I tried to find my siblings, they were  
all hidden  
I only saw them one more time, I  
was smitten.  
I tried to talk to them, but it was  
forbidden.  
I was happy. . .

*In honour of all people affected by  
residential schools.*

# Free

## Juliet Manship

I can taste the cold  
With every breath I feel more  
free  
It's refreshing  
Filled with sympathy  
Like the soft winds  
Dare I say it's purifying?  
Cleansing my thoughts

*Tip, tap, tip, tap*

It pinches as I inhale  
The temperature hitting me  
delicately  
Surrounded by a distinctive  
redolence  
Trying my best to obtain  
Filling my constant emptiness  
Counting on the comfort to heal

*Tip, tap, tip, tap*

The descending drops surround  
me  
Static fills the void  
A hefty clash from every strut  
The faint rush in the midst  
It's so rejuvenating  
Feeling so free

*Tip, tap, tip, tap*

Creating patterns in the ground  
A drop landing softly; getting  
taken over by gravity  
The caressing flow falling down  
my limbs and face  
My apparel clings to me  
unwillingly  
Breeze brushing me with every  
sway  
My hair barely flowing as it's  
weighed down

*Tip, tap, tip, tap*

The vertical lines through the  
sky  
Flashes of light reflected by the  
moon  
The world starts to blend as I  
spin  
With every gesture I feel more  
me within  
Getting closer to the warmth of  
contentment

*Tip, tap, tip, tap*

They say it's gloomy  
They say it's overwhelming  
But that's not how I'd describe it  
at all  
If anything, it frees me from  
those emotions

*Tip, tap, tip, tap*

The taps coming from my  
liberating steps and the tips  
coming from the gentle flow of  
the clouds  
To me those are soothing  
sounds

*Tip, tap, tip, tap*

My deprecating thoughts have  
been washed clean  
And now they can no longer  
intervene  
The weight of depression getting  
lifted  
Even if it's for a second, I finally  
feel less restricted

*Tip, tap, tip, tap*

# Fly Away and Goodbye.

Arianna G. Brown

Things can be hard when you lose someone,  
It is also hard when you lose a ton.

You need to hold on for as long as you can  
until they have to let go like a grip on a pan that is hot.

It will burn you and you can't stop it. It sucks.

Your heart will never fully heal,  
The dead skin will just peel  
And leave a scar.

It can be a person or animal.

Some people know when they will die,  
It hurts even more when you don't know.  
It hurts so do the things you used to do with this person  
or animal.

Don't take time for granted because you don't know when  
the time will run out.

*\*Dedicated to my Poppy, Dick, My dog Sophie and my cat Whiskers.*

# I am Someone

Sniti Shah

I am a Canadian or a foreigner, but I am someone  
I am born here or anywhere, but I am someone  
I am a black, brown or white, but I am someone  
I am smart or I am dumb, but I am someone  
I am hairy or not hairy, but I am someone  
I am scared of dark or not, but I am someone  
I am right-handed or left-handed, but I am someone  
I am short or tall, but I am someone  
I speak English or other language(s), but I am someone  
I am small or big, but I am someone  
I am loved by one person or many, but I am someone  
Hence; I love to be someone



# Our Selfless Saviour

## Amarachi Okoro

A long time of suffering passed  
And the eyes were teary  
Desperate pleads faded  
And people grew weary

“Will there ever be a Jesus?”  
God’s people shouted loud  
They thought hope was long gone  
But soon light would come down

Just by a simple mere mortal  
The Prince of Peace was born  
In a manger of dry straw bale  
It would not be a time to mourn

We called him our great king Jesus  
Who healed our diseases  
Brought us lovingly from the dark  
And cleaned our displeases

Many called him the Messiah  
Others called him a fake  
There was one thing that was for sure  
He paid for our mistake

Walking painfully with thorns  
Digging into his head  
Christ dragged the big convicted cross  
Staring sadly ahead

Tears fell as the hammer hit nails  
Blood slipped in a red pool  
The innocent rescue hung  
By the utmost cruel

Utter silence swept through the flock  
As the lifeless body flopped  
The hope in our secure leader  
Put to a sudden stop

Life soon became less cheerful  
Feet dragged along the street  
Nobody ever expected  
The incoming sweet treat

Three solemn mornings and dark nights  
The body enclosed in the tomb  
Everyone now gladly

worshipped  
The saviour that resumed

Our amazing selfless saviour  
Laid down his perfect life  
Always loved us abundantly  
But killed with only a knife

It is hard to get a strong grasp  
Why he had that mission  
For sure we should never forget  
Jesus’ brave position

# The Blue and Yellow

## James Hayward

*Dedicated to the men, women, and children of Ukraine, and to those who are paying the ultimate price for freedom and democracy*

A tempest of Blue and Yellow  
rages in the land of the noble Cossack,  
defending against a surge from the east.  
But amidst the tumult and tragedy, shines bright a beacon,  
tall and strong.  
A symbol of hope.

The people of Blue and Yellow  
turn their faces towards the light,  
like a sunflower.  
They stand tall, despite the pain.  
And they hold on to hope, with all their might.

The yellow petals are a symbol of resilience.  
A reminder - that even in the darkest of hour,  
there is knowledge  
that hope comes from resistance.  
Defiance and rebirth are foreshadowed through this flower.

The lives lost of Blue and Yellow,  
And their families - torn apart.  
Innocent they are,  
As surge came without provocation  
but we will ensure they are not forgotten.

With destruction, births a renewed unity.  
With helm under watch by unshakeable Zelensky,  
his face turned towards the light.  
And despite the odds - Blue and Yellow will prevail.  
Victory and freedom will be their mark, without fail.

Sláva Ukrayíni! Heróyam sláva!

# Pouring Rain

## Yerim Park

We were just like  
Plants and water.  
We were made for each other.  
When you're not here,  
I wither  
And become weak.  
That's why I placed a flower on your grave  
So you can water it,  
but with rain.

# Climate Change

## Agam Kaur Grewal

I look around and see these ice caps melting,  
All of these polar bears starving,  
I walk in the urban streets inhaling the bitter smell of  
gasoline and diesel,  
Looking around to see heaps and heaps of litter so illegal,  
I hear news about wildfires, avalanches, hurricanes,  
rockslides,  
And I see these old documentaries and think,  
Huh, that's not what today's world looks like,  
But the bigger question is,  
What is causing all of this?  
Well, folks you're in for a ride,  
To hear about this commonly widespread surprise,  
It all starts from some fossil fuels burned,  
And the next thing you know, we're in a natural disaster churn,  
It's just some greenhouse gases released by one person in the air,  
But only millions and millions of people have this care,  
Its just some plastic and garbage littered by one person in the  
world,  
But only billions and billions of people pull the same cords will be  
unfurled,  
For it is only time, that world will come down crashing from all  
this thrashing,  
From this climate change lashing,  
And looks like it's already begun  
But your time to fix it is never done,  
So do a small change in your life,  
Because only billions and billions of people will thrive,  
From that recycling you've done,  
Or that car's start button you've undone,  
Everyone is saving each other,  
For everyone can play a miniscule role in saving our one and only  
Mother.

# Breathe

## Haley Rahey

“Shoot your shot,” they said.

“What do you have to lose,” they said.

Everything. Everything was on the line.

I tried to shoot my shot, but it dodged the bullet, and in return

I was smothered to death,

I was left to rot with my own revolting thoughts until the last time I ever took a breath.

What am I now?

Can I still live on, or will my breath only come back at the strongest spew of necromancy?

Please,

I’m begging,

I just want myself back.

I want back the un-smothered me,

The oblivious me,

The me that was a hypocrite just because they wanted to be.

The me that I used to be, because then I could still breathe.

But that was okay, because my lungs were expanding,

And that was okay because I never knew the pain of not being able to breathe,

And I always just stuck the landing.

Because “Shoot your shot,” they said.

“What do you have to lose,” they said.

So I enslaved;

And I tried to shoot my shot, but it dodged the bullet, and in return I was smothered to death,

I was left to rot with my own revolting thoughts until the last time I ever took a breath.

So the answer to that?

Everything.

# Captive to Nostalgia

## Tiara Gonsalkoralage

I am only half here.

The other half  
Still roams the memories  
Of a life that will never be,  
A soul that longs to be set free.

My life is a facade:  
a fortress built upon a lie.  
The person who I really am:  
hidden deep inside.

Please, come home,  
I want to live again.  
The imprint of who I used to be,  
Eternally carved in me.

# Come to the Sea

Haley Paparon

Underneath the sea  
It is a magical place to be.  
Smelling the ocean breeze...  
Listening to the seashells breathe.

Near a castle, down below  
There are creatures that most of you know.  
The sun is setting, it once was bright  
I may lure in a fish or even a knight.

The sea can be an exciting place to be...  
Under the water there are many things to see.  
Or you can wander around and see the sights,  
Some of the fish may even come up for a bite.

You're free....  
To be yourself or hang with me.  
Please come to the sea with me  
And DREAM!

# The Dreamcatcher

Nealah Rose Adams

I have you hanging on my wall, but the horrible nightmares aren't gone at all. Can't they go and let me be, because the horrid past is all I can see. Trauma and tragedy fill my head, but all I seek is peaceful rest in my bed. They say the past should stay in the past, but all I can get is being harassed by my past. I don't want to remember, I just want to forget, but breakdowns and gray clouds is all I can get. I have you hanging on my wall, but all I can hear is the call, so I bawl.

#ResidentialSchools

#RememberingThePast



# Society's Standards

Haley Rahey

Society's standards collect me.

They grasp me by the hand and they drag me down to the ground

They hiss at me and make me submit.

They call me names and test my wits.

Society's standards deteriorate me.

They hold down my neck with force and pin me against the wall.

Because my body's 70% water and daddy's getting thirsty.

So they pin me down and force harsh words at me until I break, releasing all of my fluidity and individuality.

To society, I am a child.

To society's standards, I am an adult that needs to comply.

To both, I am a fragile woman that can and will be dominated for or against with or without my consent.

Society's standards are never told off, but we can erase them completely.

Nobody can hiss at me and make me submit,

They can't call me names or test my wits.

The expectation that is society's standards.

# PLEASE

Billy Graham

There was a time that thoughts would chime..  
to dare one chance of crushed romance.  
But tell the truth for this plain youth  
nothing out there stirred this heart

That changed one day and I must say..  
I never thought that I'd be caught.  
But all the while that daunting smile  
you could tease a dormant heart

Those gypsy eyes were my demise..  
there's no remiss for wedded bliss.  
The joy I hold as we grow old  
only you can please this heart

# Despair

Stephanie Boakye

Why is the world filled with despair  
Most people are very unfair  
It's not just the apple they ate  
The sin is just too great  
People are crying  
Plenty cheating and lying  
You see the world is very bad  
But don't be so sad  
This world has despair  
Still the kindness is there

# The Butterfly Effect

Ray Wade

The one and only butterfly effect.

A curse? A bond? Who knows.

It comes in many forms.

It could be a beast roaring in the shadows,

or an angel from above.

I don't know the full meaning of the butterfly effect.

All I know is,

I wish I could feel it

one more time.

# Earth

## Solenn Padua

The sound of squeaks and chirps, the sound of leaves  
crunching beneath your feet  
It's not like any sound you'd ever hear in a busy street  
The noises you hear in the forest, can clear your mind  
Look closely, every little thing perfectly designed  
From the tallest tree way up in the sky  
To the tiny insects, watching nearby  
The refreshing smell of clean air... then, you smell gas  
lingering around  
You go closer to where the smell is coming from to see  
what you have found  
The closer you go, you see that some leaves and small  
plants were shrivelled and dead  
Then you see something, just up ahead  
You see a river but it was filled with trash and the smell  
got more intense  
Now that you saw it, it made much more sense  
You had reached a dump, filled with things people threw  
away  
And you knew that things couldn't stay this way  
There was building, with smoke and gas coming out from  
the top  
They were burning the trash, but you knew there was  
nothing you could do to make it stop

Our mistakes will one day catch up with us and it won't be  
something we will be able to outrun  
We must help the earth before the damage is done.

# Maybe I Should Count Some Sheep

## Kamille Galdonez

I like to see the stars shine bright  
Through my window on those cloudy nights.  
It's beautiful when I hear the rain drip down,  
In the background, my mother frowns.

I didn't want to go to bed,  
My mother just lead  
Me back, to my bed of willow  
I sigh in awe, then I lay my head upon the pillow.

My bed was soft I started to dream,  
I woke up on a fluffy fuzzy cloud it seemed.  
My head felt sweaty, I paused  
And I wondered where I was?

The cloud traveled fast.  
I wondered how long this would last?  
I rolled over, on my shoulder  
I felt like I was so heavy, like a boulder.

The moonlight was glowing  
The clouds were slowing  
I still might fall asleep,  
Maybe now, I should count sheep?

# Number Four, Love

Jacob Godin

Poppy-tongued voices  
Whisper sweet nothings  
Perpetual promises  
Ego loves id

Addiction-eyes  
Adrenaline rushing  
Shine-sharp metal, and  
Watercolor skin

Roses thus scattered  
Wrist-roads bind us as one  
Together, we dance  
Between lines of chalk

They said not to fall in love with you

They were right

# The Crying Leak

Demetri Sansara

The secret Sandbox, to leave the landlock  
Seas of luck, muck and gutshot

To sail and sink and think Marooned  
To bail with pails at brink of noon

Speak too soon

The vast and lasting void unveiled  
The past and asking could I fail

At least I sailed

And set my sights on nights to come  
And bet the likes of light will run

Tomorrow's sun

The hope of high and rising heat  
The rope and rye and sigh relief

The Crying Leak denied defeat  
Am I to weep?

Defy the deep



# Sleep Paralysis Poem

Neomi Manuel

The room is cold. I try to be bold. I try to twist and turn my body, my visions getting foggy. The closet door creaked and I wanted to shriek. Nothings moving but something seems to be oozing out of the closet door onto my floor. I feel sore the puddle swished and swirled , something came from the inky substance, he started to twist and twirl to me, he came close and whispered “ No one will believe”

# Socks!

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Guides Fort McMurray Grade 4-6

Socks! Socks! Socks!  
My love for them is seasonal.  
They keep my toes warm.

One time...  
I forgot to take them off  
Before...  
I jumped into the pool.  
Wet. Soggy. Dripping.  
Thump. Thump. Thump.

Yesterday, I made a sock puppet  
Vibrant and tropical.  
Neons and pastels.  
Peacock. Peacock Sock.

Fluffy socks! Knee socks! Ankle socks!  
So many variations, I love them all.  
Vomit green socks at the bowling alley.  
Socks the colour of rotten bananas (day 30).

I think my black socks were white before  
But only black socks never get washed.  
When I wear them all day, they get stinky.  
Stink. Stank. Stunk.  
Overripe.

Balled up, they hit hard as rocks.  
Socks so strong they stand on their own.  
Socks so strong, they could grip an elephant  
Musty. Fusty. Putrid. Rank.

But love is seasonal...  
Socks lost in the dryer, I wonder if they miss my feet  
My feet sure do miss them.

# Tick Tock, Tick Tock

Afeefa Ahmad

Time is what we seem to have the least,  
Yet, it is what we use the worst

We decide how we use it.  
Or how we waste it.

Time is what we have – and don't,  
And the thing that many want the most.

When we are walking,  
time is running,

And when we are running,  
It is flying;

We can never seem to catch up.

# Animals

Kendra Dizon

Animals are going extinct year by year,  
Soon some of our favorite animals are going to be gone.  
The earth's is not a video game,  
animals don't just randomly spawn.

So far axolotls are going extinct so are pandas,  
Due lack of bamboo branches,  
The pandas don't have many chances,  
To live that long.

There are many animals who also suffer this,  
Please help the earth or,  
there might be an animal you might miss.  
We must help to conserve these poor animals.

Spread the news to your friend and donate to national  
parks.  
Help the endangered species and make a mark,  
To this world.

# Thoughts of the World

Kadence Shaw

Me laying in bed,  
Everything on my mind but nothing to be said.  
I stare up at my ceiling, while I contemplate the meaning of  
why we're here existing.

Is my mind full of thoughts  
or is it just wandering off?  
Am I here with a purpose  
or is there something much larger  
that thoughts cannot fill?

# Moondance

Alyssa Joyce

They say that mice are quiet  
Like a shadow or the stars  
Their feet a silent whisper  
They move without a sound

My dear they are mistaken  
In their stories and their tales  
For all of my mice friends and I  
We dance loud and without fail

The moon it shines above us  
And the fireflies glide along  
As we twirl about the grass  
To the spirit of a song

So listen to the tune  
And follow our good cheer  
Feel the childlike wonder  
Smiling at the moon

# Sky Dancers

Jaime Conger

I watch in amazement as  
The vivid lights dance  
Across the sky.  
As I watch  
The drifting  
Lights in a  
Pure daze,  
The mosquitos  
Make their move,  
I'm terribly itchy.

# Sea Turtle

## Vianna Dietz

Swimming through the ocean  
Each turtle hatching on the sand  
A slowly – moving reptile  
Their babies are on their own  
Using their flippers to swim  
Ready to embrace the world  
Tough shells on their backs  
Living long as decades, yet  
Endangered from human threats



# Villain

## Suhana Sanze

Why are you so difficult?  
You're radiating a beast of thunderstorms,  
You're forcing the sky to split and die,  
Causing mountainous bombs to landslide.

For you "bubbles and teas" can't be the norm,  
You desire fire, everything else is a bore.  
An entity who cannot be misunderstood,  
Or gore is what you'll put down first foot.

Not kept under hood, your danger speaks out,  
Carrying four fists wherever you go.  
Streamline and stiff, guns row by row,  
Your show for the universe is a bleeding shout.

I beg free of your wrath and callousness glee,  
No mercy there shall be unto thee.  
There is terror on your tongue, ruth in your gums,  
Causing the bravest sharks to lose their runs.

No soul dwells more than it can take,  
But a crime like yours is of incessant hate.  
Surely, I'll flee, and surely, you'll die,  
But mark my words, what's soon to come,  
You cannot deny.

# Water of Joy

## Charmy Shukla

The ocean which was once unsettling,  
Unfamiliar, unknown.  
Now is my place of joy.  
The water, my friend.  
We go hand in hand,  
I swim in its body, it floats in my heart,  
Stripping away all the sadness.  
Once it's all gone.  
All the memories that dragged me deep,  
Swam away 6 feet.  
Nothing but kindness and happiness remain,  
No inner beast to contain.  
The ocean my friend.  
My place of joy.

# I Can See the Future

Michael Bautista

I can see way into the future  
When I am ridin' my gold and silver scooter.  
With wings, coloured purple and pink.  
It can take off as quick as a wink.

My scooter is on the make  
But needs yellow and green coloured brakes,  
So I fly down and make some stops  
Maybe eat ice cream and, shop.

I might be able to buy some books on the future of flying,  
Some people may think that maybe I'm lying.  
Because they don't think I can see into the future  
With my scooter, and my red and black coloured, jet-packed  
booster.

I will be makin' my way to Saturn with its many satellite  
moons.  
I am hopeful my mom will hurry and get my lunch made  
soon.  
I want to make it there in record speeds,  
I know I will definitely need  
To eat by noon, so my mighty journey may proceed.

I can see way into the future, just like a storm-trooper  
That's why I know my next trip, will be really super!

# Bad Day

## Moriah Amanyi

When you are having a bad day  
and things aren't going your way  
think of your happy place  
don't let sadness start its chase

When you are having a bad day  
and sadness strays into your space  
think of your happy place  
and let the good times start its chase

When you are having a bad day  
and have no one to play or pray  
think of your happy place  
don't stay beat up with its choking embrace.

When you are having a bad day  
and it feels like it has come to stay  
think of your happy place  
and remember that it is a phase

When you are having a bad day  
and your face has lost its grace  
think of your happy place  
and let the memory fill your space

# BUTTERFLY

## Charlie Masear

Sitting alone on a hillside,  
Blades of grass itched my knees,  
And a white butterfly passed me by;  
Fluttering, unknowing.  
And I reached my hand out gently.  
It landed on the tip of my finger;  
Fearless, unwavering.  
And I asked it a question in my head —  
*“Do you know you’re alive?”*  
*“Do you know you’re sentient, do you know you exist?”*  
And it looked at me,  
Black beady eyes;  
Staring, thinking.  
And it left as soon as it came,  
Questions unanswered,  
And I sit alone on the hillside once again.

# A Shadow of Reality

## Natashia Gushue-Birkett

The Professor put the class on edge every time he smoked.

He waved a lit match just below his nose and set the tip ablaze.

It was the only true light in the room,  
overshadowing the dull flicker of the overhead bulbs.  
Clouds of smoke drifted up the nostrils of the half dead students,  
each on the brink of an exhaustion-fuelled sleep.

Shadows danced on their faces like fleeting thoughts.  
The Professor turned, facing the blackboard, which stated  
“On the walls of the cave, only the shadows are the truth.”  
He picked up a stick of dry white chalk. The chalk screeched,  
breeding words across the board.

It was at that precise moment two frat boys  
in sunglasses and tank tops turned their backs and  
dropped their drawers,  
mooning The Professor.

They snickered to each other, fulfilled in their prank.  
All while The Professor casually explained Plato’s Cave and  
how the movement of each shadow seen by the chained prisoners  
was the closest they’d ever get  
to reality.

# If Only

Afeefa Ahmad

If only we could hold each other tight,  
And pick each other up when we fall!

If only we do not let go of each other's hands,  
But instead, unite together as one and firmly stand.

If only we could put aside our differences,  
And focus on our similarities;

Regard each other as "Us,"  
rather than "Them."

If only we could begin to see each other as family, a part of  
a single humanity;  
rather than as members of a specific group, race, or  
ethnicity,

We would be able to tackle the major issues that persist in  
our society,  
such as discrimination, injustice, and poverty.

Peace, happiness, and joy would certainly come our way,  
and our world would become a better place.

But that may just remain a dream.

# Dora the Explorer

Amrita Toor

There once was a girl named Dora,  
And man she was quite an explorer.  
Day and night she went out to explore,  
And found many things to adore.  
She had a monkey friend named Boots,  
Little man wore little red shoes.  
Day and night they went exploring,  
Even if it was pouring.  
But one day,  
Along came swiper,  
Who stole Dora's backpack,  
Fast as a viper.  
Dora was mad,  
So she pulled out a sniper!  
BAM!  
BAM!  
BAM!  
Swiper won't be swiping no more,  
And just for fun, my girl shot him twice more.  
They left his dead body there for predators to explore,  
And off to Abuelas house they went.  
So the moral of the story,  
Is when your out exploring,  
Don't ever mess with our favourite bad chick,  
Dora the dang explorer.



# The Ocean

## Angela Murrin

Fantastic creatures lurk—left unseen,  
capped by a ceiling of glass  
and fervent ebbs of lucid swells.  
They surge ageless, churning filament,  
and salting the air.

Dayboaters bask with tanned, brackish skin  
and sun-seared hair.  
Water wayfarers cast silk lines  
into the sea  
and wade through fleeting, lazy days.

At night,  
bruised and dusky skies  
reflect across the surface,  
posing as something serene,  
and hold the fate of fishermen who are bonded  
by the boundless deep.

Both feared and revered—tides collide  
and are lit up by beacons  
and sounds of forlorn foghorns,  
sighing tales of valor  
and immemorial mythologies.

Iridescent whitecaps—forever break.  
Delicate strength is spilled,  
foaming and cascading,  
diffused onto steadfast but helpless shores.

The cold rush is embraced  
by the contradiction of day-dried sand,  
safe— and as warm as cinnamon.

# A Fight for Those I Love

Parker Penrose

Hours, we spent listening together, heartbeats pounding in our ears.

Forcing our thoughts to forget the words heard through the thin walls of the house.

Hearts wearing boxing gloves to protect against hurtful words.

surviving the night simply for the sake of our siblings.

Conjuring walls around our hearts and minds to keep out the pain of being unwanted.

For when it finally went quiet we remember that our mother is doing this for us.

Making gravestones in our minds for the things we never should have heard.

For those I must survive for are those I love most: my sisters and brothers.

I love you.

# Wishing on a Broken Star

Tineesha McKay

That shooting star that you wished on, wasn't even there...

Wishes only arrive light years later, but they make you hope and care.

If you left your own world sometime, I think you would like it up here...

There is no one to impress, or fear.

Since sound cannot survive in space, living without my voice...

might make it your favorite place.

There is no one to find me or hear me scream.

But for now, I just wait in the sky and barely orbit your mind...

like a broken starry dream.

# Gen Z, lykyk

## Sarah Khandoker

I stan math, it feels like a snacc  
But when i got my test back i said “stop the cap”  
Saying that I ate that up would need forgiving  
The mark was not snatched, deff was not giving  
My mom’s finna be sus, asking me to spill the tea  
Telling me I took a common L which was not boujee  
To be fr tho, i never really cared  
To get ratioed didn’t make me scared  
Since I plan on attending University of Rizzanomics  
I just need to make sure to slay all classes covering Rizzics  
Then I can finally give yas queen slay periodt

W

# The Bee and the Flower

Ray Wade

As the sun melts away in the distance,  
we stand here together for one last time.  
The way we need each other is unforgettable,  
just like bees and flowers  
The bee would always try to protect the flower.  
But in the end  
you didn't need me as much as honey.

# Firefly

## Haley Rahey

You're like a firefly.

You're dull during the day, bright during the night.

But you're still a beetle.

You still have the capacity to bite me with your cold, hard teeth and make my skin blister and blister until it rots.

You're like a firefly.

Your light is cold.

But the feeling I get when I'm with you is warmth.

Yet it's becoming so old.

Do people wish on fireflies?

Because I wish when I'm with you.

Because you are just a firefly.

You're like a beetle,

That can eat and tug at my precious skin with your cold, hard teeth, and you can make my skin blister and blister and rot.

# My Metamorphosis

## Tineesha McKay

Before I could fly,  
things were slow and tough...

Barely surviving as a larva,  
called "too much" or "not enough."

Never enough room,  
and too much fuzzy hair...

Having no place for me,  
still they had to stop and stare.

Hiding seemed safer,  
just a little lonely and tight...

Until I began to shed my old skin,  
which hurt...but also felt right.

There was no one to say that I am doing it wrong,  
just my own cocoon...  
holding onto me strong.

Feeling alone was something I was used to,  
but finding acceptance...  
is when my wings broke through.

They grew more and more each night and day,  
guiding me out of my darkness...  
into a new way.

Sipping on sweet nectar now,  
I think back to my dark hidden season...

When I transformed into a butterfly,  
and learned to fly on my own...

for my own will and reason.

# The Power of Solitude

Afeefa Ahmad

It is during a state of solitude,  
A person grows.

Views are ripened,  
The heart finds repose.

Away from the distractions of the world,  
The soul can achieve a true state of bliss.

The mind is free to form its opinions,  
hunt for stimulating thoughts and reminisce.

Most importantly, it is during a state of solitude,  
One's true identity is found after being lost.



# MOON

Charlie Masear

How I long for your glowing touch

Against the November blue sky.

Your air is crisp,

Silent,

Still.

Everyone knows you by name, but I'm the only one who  
does by soul;

And your voice sings a melody that nobody but I can hear,

Whispering and wavering in my heart.

Nostalgia flows through my lungs with the soft scent of  
floral laundry detergent —

But is drowned out by the lighting of a cigarette and the  
clinking of empty glass.

Comforting.

Your eyes are more poetic than words could ever speak,

And your picture could never be captured.

You're the moon,

and I'm nothing but a star.

# Etcetera

## Natashia Gushue-Birkett

the back door creaks  
work boots tossed aside  
lay next to heels,  
perfectly placed  
a personal pet peeve

laundry tumbles in the dryer  
while dinner cooks  
flour coated cloth  
reads 'kitchen rules'  
two disinterested faces  
slog through homework

the bills have been paid  
after a long day  
no longer than  
the weeks, months, years  
marked by a brief kiss and  
a simple "what's for dinner?"

tonight goes on  
as each one does  
with dishes, tv, and  
putting the kids to bed  
but  
walk into the bathroom  
and there lies  
the unscrewed  
toothpaste cap

# LOSING MY WAY

Michael Parr

Excuse me ma'am/sir, but I have  
seemed to have lost my way...  
Which direction are you  
travelling, they asked?  
That's just it, I said, I do not  
know.  
And they replied, well I guess it  
doesn't matter which way you  
go.

That's true I suppose, if I have  
no way to go  
Than any direction will be  
decided by which way the wind  
blows,  
But I'm trying to find my  
people I explained...

Are they rich or poor?  
Black, Gentile or Jew?  
Do you derive from elaborate  
roots;  
From some colossal tree?

Perhaps you can say what you  
believe  
Show me your garments and  
what you eat,  
Your hairstyle, your  
symbology, your books,  
And all your secret graven  
images.

I have no plan, no clan, I said  
No mission, no creed  
But I do try to honour all  
mankind  
and wish for all men to be freed.

I have no people to let go,  
No home, no identity to claim,  
And though I'm lost; I'm not  
lonely,  
As I beat this funeral march to  
the grave.

I do not wish to be a  
collection,  
Labelled, put in a jar on the  
shelf, or stuck back in the  
stacks  
I am who I am,  
free to love, clean and forgive.

I think I see your matter plain,  
they said  
Many who venture beyond the  
walls  
And seashores that are known  
Are not lost, though they do not  
know the way

They may travel with  
newfound brother and sister and  
All that binds are renewed hopes  
and new dreams.  
The are not a collective, but  
someone may label them so  
That they may be divided, in an  
attempt  
to conquer all that can never be  
controlled.

# Princess

## Juliet Manship

I tried to protect you  
From the dragons that scream spiteful words  
Or the witches that gossip behind you

I tried everything I could  
Sing mesmerizing songs to you  
Or take you to a castle, sheltering you from the evil

I'd remind you of the good  
I'd make you look in the right places and see that you're beauty can  
not be compared

But it didn't work

It wasn't that the witches not so quiet voices reached your ears  
Or I didn't sing loud enough  
But my own self doubts that killed your princess

When I place you in front of the magic mirror all my  
insecurities showed  
I would drown in them but fight to keep you above it all

I was hypocritical

Making you look at the positives as I dwelled on my  
imperfections  
Not letting you take degrading words as I absorbed them like a  
magic eating monster

It wasn't fair  
I tried to protect you

Maybe if I wasn't so timorous I would have succeeded  
You would see yourself as the princess you are

But now you have to learn how to wear the crown again  
To walk with books stacked on your head  
Standing up straight and keeping your head held high

I still haven't learned  
I'm sorry I couldn't love myself for you  
My princess died too

# A Most Delicious Idea

## Cullen Bird

What is this delicious feeling?  
It warms my belly  
Floods my brain with happy  
sparks  
And clears my eyes  
Oh  
The world is brighter now  
Crystal-coated  
Shining in the light of a  
magnificent star  
All because... I tasted  
something  
What was that beautiful  
thought?  
That tempting idea?  
It was...  
Soaring  
Weightless  
Like a balloon in a gale  
Pushing high and hard into at-  
mosphere  
Wicked wild and fast  
Past the glittering clouds of ice  
All sight, all vision  
Dancing on the arc of the edge  
of the Earth  
Below!  
Whole continents, those  
awkward things  
Moving towards each other  
Inch by inch  
In the shyest of dances  
Ahead!  
Arcing towards us  
The space station!  
Many-winged insect of science  
Achievement distilled  
Beaming glimmers of the  
cosmos back  
Home  
Our emerald and sapphire  
marble  
Wreathed in white vapour

Not grand, but miraculous  
A blip  
A button  
Sewn into the black cloth of  
space  
Which stretches out silently  
On a scale beyond thought  
The enormity of it  
Demands a hush  
Time stretches  
Slows.  
Stops.  
. . .  
What \*was\* that idea?  
Ah, yes  
I'll have to work at it every day  
Hustle hard  
Toil against conflict and doubt  
Charge towards disappointment  
And push past it  
Hurrah.  
It's boring, sinking  
Through twice-seen sky  
The glow is gone  
The crystalline world melts  
away  
Ice, it was only ice  
Freezing the world in a state  
Of possibility  
Now it's dirty water  
Ground-bound again  
Sucking mud swallows my  
boots  
A hard day's work ahead  
I'd rather be anywhere than  
here  
Because I would much rather  
taste  
Than plant  
The seed of an idea.



