



wood buffalo regional library

Words in Motion

2025

Welcome to Words in Motion 2025



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 30 poems for our Words in Motion booklet. We live in a region with so much amazing talent.

Thank you to our amazing judges: Gloria Abada, Ryan Cox, and Jamal-e-fatima Rafat. We appreciate the time and effort you dedicated to the competition this year.

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

Drymeat

Shaylean Gladu

1st Place Overall

I have learned from my family
The secret of never having a home
My Nohkôm feeds me dry meat
she cut into small pieces
mixes it with butter
I am 2
I forget what my mother looks like
I meet her and remember what it means
To have a mom
It's not butter, it's margarine
I can't tell the difference

A coworker complains about their mother
How she clings and loves
She mixes honey into her tea
She tells me sweetener is too sweet
"Honey is better, honey is natural."
I am 20
I see other daughters with their mothers
I wonder how it is
To have a mom
Sweetener isn't the same as honey
I can't tell the difference

Someone asks, "Is your mom coming?
It's your wedding day."
I hold the bouquet of flowers I made
Fake flowers don't die
They will last forever
I am 31
Some daughters wear their mother's dress
I wonder how it is
To have a mom
Real flowers sit in a vase on the counter
I can't tell the difference

I share dry meat from my Nohkôm
with my son
We talk about how special
It is to have a small bag
He is 11
He dips it into margarine
I wonder how it is
To have a mom
He says "Don't get too comfortable
Câpân is getting old"

Nohkôm - A Cree word meaning
"Grandmother"

Câpân - A Cree word meaning "Great
grandparent/ Great grandchild"

The Silenced Suffer the Most

Aminah Pathan

2nd Place Overall

Every day, there is invisible *social conflict*.

One aches for *Freedom*, while the other for *Control*.

Once *united*, now *separated*.

Who will take the first step to bring unity?

There can be no *peace*, without *justice*.

No *trust*, silent *judgement* flowing in the stressful atmosphere.

Eyes filled with *distrust* and *fear*, just like their actions.

Once the *freedom* that's fresh, like blood from flesh,

Silence that no one can bear, it drives them mad.

The one controlling supposes they protect,

But they cause *anxiety*, something they can't detect.

They take time out to *reflect*.

They crave *justice*,

Speak so aggressively, their voices bluster.

This silent peace is nerve wracking,

Like birds slicing through the open blue and white sky,

Aiming for their prey who swims upstream in a river.

Like a cold breeze that makes you shiver.

Like a horse who used to run wild in wide fields,

Now caged up by us merciless creatures,

In the poor horse's eyes, we are the *villain*.

This isn't just about a Horse,

It's about the Hands that created the Cage.

Zebra Sarasa Rollerball

Eman Kamran

3rd Place Overall

Promise me your Sunday nights, not your Monday mornings.
Let me read your first draft.
Clear a spot on your cluttered bedroom floor.
Feel my hand tighten in yours when your palms are damp and your
mind is strained.
Leave the pauses unfilled, the letters half-formed on your tongue.
I'll hold the quiet with you, listen to every word you don't say.
Let me hold the pen with you when your hand quivers and shakes,
When the words overwhelm you, but the thoughts never stray.
And in that vulnerability, find solace in knowing
That my heart is within your hands, just like the pen that I am holding.
When the ink bleeds through pages
And the pen has run dry,
We can read the draft together,
Revising your words as one, side by side.
You'll sit next to me among rumpled clothes and lab reports,
Crumpled chocolate wrappers,
And together we'll linger over the words that aren't mine.
Then you'll correct me, say they're not just your words—
They're mine—
And remind me it was my fingers clutched around the pen all this time.
In that quiet moment, I'll turn to you and say,
"Can you take this pen? It's getting in my way."
Twirled between your fingers,
Your hand clasps mine.
The connection reminds me of how I love you and I—
You and I, together.
The silence descends over us,
Yet my fears whisper their way,
Bolstered by connection,
And right up to your ears where they stay.
You flip the page and write the date on the top-right corner.
I'd like you to see me, forever in this way,
Vulnerable and intimate, with the words I can never say,
Where the story weaves together, and I cherish the poet every day.
Let me stumble with you, through chapters we don't know,
The pages we haven't turned,
And the thoughts we've yet to uncover.
Let us read my first draft.

Apartment for Two

Eman Kamran

Woke up in my new apartment,
In this twin-sized bed,
Lasko whirring,
Empty red phone and tired eyes,
Staring past the morning,
Kiss this bedding bye-bye.

Woke up in your vintage suite,
Stomach churning, full of kisses so sweet.
You smell like grass and cologne,
And you look like a stranger that I've always known.

Bite back another crooked smile,
You drive me reckless,
Mesmerize and beguile.
Soft red lips,
Curved like a promise,
Make me lose my wits,
I'm hooked, I'll be honest.

Falling in bed, falling in you,
Sunlight plays, I taste morning dew.
Steady gazes, eyes of thunder,
I surmise you're lost in the same spell,
Pulled asunder.

Woke up in this bed alone,
Twisted in the sheets, staring at your cheekbone.
Well, not really, my eyes still closed,
But the thoughts of you won't leave me alone.

I'm not complaining, I'd love them to stay,
No eviction notice, though they muddle my brain.
I talk so much, but day by day,
You render me voiceless, even when you're far away.

Wishes

KN

The thorn looked up at the rose,
Longing to share its beauty,
Delicate and fragrant,
Admired by all.

The rose looked down at the thorn,
Wishing to remain unchanged,
Mighty and resilient,
Like a guardian angel.

Beautiful Existence

Karla-Rae Forsey

The pretty daisy stood alone,
In the empty field,
Basking in the sunlight,
Enraptured by it's glow.
The wind lapped gently at her petals,
And she danced in it's motion,
Sublimely happy and content.
A bluebird flitted past her,
She marvelled in it's beauty,
And laughed sweetly to herself.
It was so peaceful here.
A whirr of an engine
Startles her from her reverie
And she looks up in terror
To see the lawnmower,
As it crushes her alive.
The dead little daisy,
Is no longer pretty,
But a pile of mulch,
And compost for the garden.

When the Music Left

Cassandra Joy Rumbolt

Once, my fingers danced with ease,
A melody born from breath and breeze.
Each note a whisper, a soft embrace,
I could get lost in the music, lost in the space.

I used to play for love, not praise,
Where every note was sunlight's gaze.
The piano spoke, and I would listen.
Fingers tracing dreams that glistened

There was no clock, no ticking race,
Just quiet hours in a sacred space.
But then it came, the weight of "more,"
The endless drills, the sharpened score.

It now feels like work, each scale each phrase,
Practicing the same line for hours, days.
The joy began to slip and fade,
When I traded joy for perfection's blade.

Fear holds me tight, anxiety speaks,
Turning love into a tremble wick leaks
Mistakes as I play, I now dread to perform.
Patience is thin after passion is worn.

The music has lost its gentle sound,
Replaced by rules, by walls, by bounds.
So the piano sits in the corner, gathers dust;
A forgotten friend, a broken trust.

Beauty is Beauty

Evalina Roache

Beauty doesn't always fit like a glove
To some people beauty means love
To some people beauty means to create a non-version of you,
beauty rests within the vanity
The vanity is a cruel truth of humanity
The societies are ruining earth's creation
Don't let societies "beauty" bog you down
As for me my darling
You are one of a kind beautiful
So love yourself forever and always.

Together, with me

Abbie Wang

Sit with me,
On top of the hill,
Where we lie on the patchy grass,
And watch the clouds drift, soft and slow.

Walk with me,
Through the park,
And into the deep, wild woods,
Where the world is in our hands

Run with me,
Into the wind's breath,
Where time folds into nothing,
And the sun spills gold across the sky.

Rest with me,
On this quiet bench,
To continue our endless cycle
Together, with me.

Blessed with two

Amanda Hawley

Six long years of waiting,
of wishing, and hoping for you!
Six long years of wondering,
When will my dream come true?

Six long years of heartache,
Countless negative tests,
Six long years of praying,
Would it be my turn next?

My beautiful girls,
worth every prayer and
every wish I ever made,
My beautiful girls,
Worth every tear I ever shed,
and every heart break

I'd do it all again,
Those six long years.
I'd do it all again,
That much is clear!

Those sleepless nights,
That early morning cry,
The mountains of laundry,
The diapers piled high.

Worth everything and more,
Even my own life it's true
You see
I only asked god for one,
But then I was blessed with two!

If I Could Fly

Kendra Dizon

If I could fly,
I'd soar like a bird, into the sky.
No traffic jams, no bumpy buses,
Just me, the clouds, without any fusses.

If I could fly,
I'd swoop past the houses, so tiny and small,
And waved to the people standing tall.
I'd race with the wind, a swooshing, fast friend,
And see the world to the very end.

If I could fly,
I'd peek at the mountains, very pointy and grand,
Touch the cold snow, with my own hands.
I'd fly over the ocean so blue and so deep,
And watch the fishes while they dive super steep.

If I could fly the thing I would see,
Would fill up my heart, with pure glee.
But even if I can't, I can still dream,
Of flying so high I would probably scream.
Like magic and wonder all mixed in one,
If I could fly till the setting sun.

Cry for Justice

Taha Ahmad

The gavel falls, a hollow sound,
While blood seeps deep into the ground.
A world of cries, yet deafened ears,
Turn from the truth, consumed by fears.

In shadowed lands, the helpless plead,
While power feeds on hate and greed.
The sky burns red with silent screams,
Ignored by those who chase their dreams.

Blindfolded scales, a broken weight,
Justice waits, but far too late.
The price of peace, a heavy toll,
Paid in silence, it stains the soul.

What use are words, if not to speak?
What good are hands, if they stay meek?
Open your eyes, let action rise,
For when justice dies when conscience lies.

The Werewolf

Vianna Dietz

Erupting with a bloodthirsty screech the being rises up
A coat of fur shining in the moonlight
Pricked blades in the drooling mouth of a sadistic monster
Eyes like glass balls of misery
Slithering along the trail
Showing no mercy for all that have crossed its path
The ebony-coloured night above
And the innocent souls below

Girl From McMurray

Karla-Rae Forsey

There once was a girl from McMurray,
Whose fiancée had started to worry -
With props piled high
She continued to buy
And their bank account drained in a flurry.

"Learn to sew! Learn to knit!" he would say
"You haven't used half this shit to this day!"
"Oh hun, don't be silly
It's not so much really
And it isn't like YOU have to pay!"

So our girl she continued to shop
For hats, blankets, and baskets and props -
But she kept on forgetting
To save for their wedding
So she told herself "Hey Karla STOP!"

But Emily tagged her in a post
She knew of all of her friends she liked most
That I'd LOVE this sweet bonnet
So said "Write me a sonnet"
And hey, maybe just pay for post!

But sonnets are just not my style
I wrote this limerick to make you all smile
And whether I win or not
At least I haven't bought
Another prop just to add to my pile.

The Weight of Growing Up

Zoe Doudiet

They tell her to smile, but not too wide,
A grin too bright is a dangerous guide.
They dress her in ribbons, then scold her for lace,
Demanding she shrink, yet stay in the race.

Her voice is too loud, her silence too cold,
At thirteen, she's young—at fourteen, she's old.
They carve out her worth in magazine eyes,
Yet shame her for chasing the shimmering lies.

She learns to be small, to fold in her spine,
A shadow of dreams that once dared to shine.
The world hands her scripts she never did write,
A girl by day, a ghost by night.

Yet under the weight of their rules and their chains,
She whispers her name and in her space remains.
Maybe one day she won't just be something to judge,
To release someone's own insecurities.
When will that day come? Maybe never,
She can only dream it'll be soon

Happy Life

Pranshi Shah

A happy heart spreads joyful light,
Turning darkness into bright.
With happy vibes, a soul will glow,
And positivity will only grow.

Spread kindness, share delight,
Let love shine both day and night.
Happiness blooms when given away,
A simple act can make someone's day.

We are here to smile and cheer,
To lift each other year by year.
Goals may differ, paths may stray,
But true success is joy each day.

Cherish each moment, big or small,
Find the good in one and all.
A grateful heart, so light and free,
Brings endless joy for all to see.

Nothing in life is fail or pass,
Each step we take helps us surpass.
Lessons learned, both big and small,
Shape our journey—guide us all.

A positive mind makes a happy life,
Free from worries, stress, and strife.
Be grateful for all you have today,
Joy and blessings will light your way

The Wasteland

Faith Asefa

There is nothing left in this wasteland.
With hopes and dreams left unfulfilled,
With hearts as barren as the void,
Where screams and moans echo in the land,
But is deaf to human ears.
The land of the dead.

It lures you in with a sweet voice,
It cradles you and cajoles you,
It makes sure that you can't escape it's grasp.
Then it devours you of all your doubts,
Your convictions,
And your dreams,
Until you are as barren as the wasteland.

Hurricane of Feelings

Agam Grewal

Swept in a hurricane of feelings
And yet, I'm still breathing
The whole world has taken a pause
But I cannot find the cause
I was just here and now
But I know that's not how it went down
Although I sense anger pulsing through my veins
In the same bloodstream, I find there is pain
It seems as if I'm in the chaos of a storm
Where tranquility is very unknown
It seems as if I'm in the whirlwind of a tornado
Crushed like a sculpture of playdough
Floating in this haze with no ports
Feeling amorphous and amorphous
I cannot find escape or any healing
Swept in a hurricane of feelings

The core of my heart, the core of myself

Katelyn McKay

The warmth in your heart when you stride through the door
The place to relieve when you're hurting and sore
Plentiful with ones that are cherished and dear
The ones by your heart, close and near

Here you will feel protected
Here you will feel respected
A warm embrace like a hug or a hot tea
A velvety soft touch of a dog or tabby

The secured strong voice of a father
The soft comforting voice of a mother
The laughs and love from a sibling
The fire crackling from the kindling

A fuzzy blanket to cloak around yourself and disappear
As you get comfortable affection and tenderness will appear
Books full of knowledge line the halls
History and love, engraved into the walls

The definition of home is not a building
It is a safe place with no need for hiding
It is separate from the outside commotion
It is a place where you can spill all of your emotion

The pressure of the world instantly lifts
Love towers up as high as Mount Everest
To go there, to touch, to smell, to see there is no cost
It is an island of hope in a sea of lost

Mind vs Heart

Dilanie Kuo

I live life in high contrast.
It renders me empathetic
to all stars under a
night sky, yet it blinds
me from the
meteor coming at me.

My minds urge to help, make
the world a better place. To be
proof that good can
come from the bad.

My hearts urge to finally
be understood. The longing desire
to not be a warrior
out of necessity.

The excruciating fear that
if i am not the saviour of these
lost children in the world,
then i 'm simply just another
broken child.

The Singing Grove

Kendra Dizon

Beneath the cloud up in the sky,
The trees do whisper a quiet lullaby.
Their branches dance, their voices fly high.
Their leaves sway side to side.

The trees sing of spring's bloom and flowers,
Summer's warm and bright, their golden hour.
The cold autumn breeze,
Winter's white makes them freeze.

But the trees still sing.
Words of wisdom even through ancient times,
The trees grow stronger with every line.
Their roots embrace the earth below,
In silent strength, through storms they grow.

So come in closer hear what they say,
Future and past, night and day.
Those who listen to the lines soft and true,
The whispering trees are singing to you.

Planet Poem

Ava Monias

Saturn isn't the only planet to have rings
rings we see are made of chunks of rock and ice
Like Jupiter, Saturn is mostly
a ball of hydrogen and helium spice.

Mercury is the smallest planet in our solar system
just a little bigger than earth's moon
the closest planet to the sun, but not the hottest.
Venus is hotter than doom.

Mars is a cold desert world.
average temperature minus 85
way below freezing
half the size of earth's hive.

Jupiter, the biggest planet in our solar system.
covered in swirling cloud stripes.
big storms like the great red spot.
similar to a star, but never got massive hypes.

The Lost Sock's Journey

Kendra Dizon

With the rumming and the churning,
The sock's in the washer kept turning.
But one sock slipped out,
An adventure had begun without a doubt.

Through vents and under doors it crept,
While the other twin cried and wept.
It adventured the wilds beneath the bed,
Where dust bunnies and secrets spread.

Past the shoes in the closet very deep,
It journeyed on, with no time to sleep.
It met a mitten near the door,
A lonely hat on the floor.

The sock made its way to the kitchen,
It encountered the leftover chicken,
A mitten warm and oven grand.
They shared tales of adventure, all over the land.

At the end of the day, the sock did tire,
And longed to be back by the dryer.
Retracing steps, it found its way,
To reunite with its pair at the end of the day.

As it made its way back,
The sock climbed on the stack.
It paired back again.
The lost sock's journey had been long,
But now it knew where it belonged.

Tears for Gaza

Taha Ahmad

The black of ash, the red of pain,
The white of grief, a hope in vain.
Green fields now buried, roots erased,
A homeland's memory displaced.

The streets of Gaza, lined with tears,
Echo cries that pierce the years.
Yet blinded eyes refuse to see,
The depth of this humanity.

War crimes thrive in shadowed halls,
Where justice hears but never calls.
And while the innocent endure,
The world looks on, aloof, unsure.

What is the cost of words unsaid,
When silence feeds the flames instead?
Rise, speak truth—don't turn away,
For justice dies with each delay.

Rise Like the Sun

Ava Bashangi

When darkness whispers, "You can't go on,"
And hope feels like a faded song,
Lift your chin, stand up tall,
Even shadows rise and fall.

The world may tell you, "Stay in line,"
Dreams too big? A waste of time.
But mountains move, and rivers bend,
The strongest hearts will never end.

The stars don't fear the endless night,
They shine with all their golden might.
So when you're lost and feeling small,
Remember you can rise through all.

Rise like the sun, break through the sky,
Paint your dreams and learn to fly.
No storm can shake the fire inside,
You are strong. You will rise.

They'll break your wings, they'll call you weak,
They'll drown your voice when you try to speak.
They'll laugh, they'll doubt, they'll watch you fall,
But rise again outgrow them all.

Your scars will shine, your pain will fade,
The strongest souls are battle-made.
So stand back up, don't close your eyes,
The fire in you will never die.

Have a voice. Get back up

Running through the Field on a Summer Day

Kaylee Kippenhuck

I feel the wind blow through my hair
The cool cool wind

I see the flowers sway to and fro
The beautiful beautiful flowers

I feel the grass under my feet
The wet wet grass

I see the width of the sky
The blue blue sky

I feel my body in motion
My strong strong body

I see a deer leap through the field
The graceful graceful deer

I feel the warmth of the sun on my skin
The bright bright sun

I see the trees reaching up
The tall tall trees

I feel the calmness of nature
Peaceful Peaceful nature

and I am filled with joy

Beneath the Willow Tree

Tiffany Onyolu Anthony

*Beneath the willow tree, soldiers lay, never to see another day.
The birds cry, the flowers wilt, each overcome with guilt.
The fields are scorched with ash and blood.
For what could have gone wrong?
The skies are filled with gray, to mourn this melancholy day.
For just a few weeks this place was a garden.
To celebrate the soldiers who had fallen.*

*Beneath the willow tree, boys would play.
Now, only their bones remain.
None had families, nor had friends.
They were alone, till the end.
Shipped off to war, not even ten,
Their lives had come to an unhappy end.
No one would remember the boys who fought for their lives.
Why should they? They had won the war by a margin.
No one would visit this tiny garden.*

*Beneath the willow tree, far far away, perhaps there was a place where they could stay
A paradise, some would call it, for there was no war, no famine, no hunger, no pain,
Who wouldn't want to stay there all day?
There, the sorrow all goes away, happiness is the only thing that remains.
The paradise is sunny all day long,
Rain is something that is gone.
Do not fret, nor be sad, for everything you could ever need, is in this very land.*

*Beneath the willow tree, their cries can be heard,
It echoes in the wind, filling the earth.
So many children lost to war
And for what?
In reality, no side wins
For they each have suffered gravely for their sins.
Mothers weep for their fallen children,
Their bodies left decayed and rotten
This willow tree, once a symbol of peace,
Has all but deceased
It's golden leaves turned to brown,
The sound of silence all around
For it's been 2 years since the war has passed
And no one has paid this garden a second glance.*

*Beneath the willow tree, it's roots strengthen their grip,
Protecting the children still cursed to roam.
They've been there for years, all of them.
And together, they make their own paradise.
It may not be as beautiful as the one they've heard,*

*But it's their home.
It's what they deserve.
For they've fought so hard, so mighty,
It's time for them to rest, underneath the willow tree.
Nothing would touch them as long as it were there.
Together, they play till the end of time.
Beneath the willow tree.*

Orange Peels

Eman Kamran

I meticulously paint rouge on my cheeks, smudging the pigment beneath my hot fingertips, the product melting and seeping into blemished skin. Then, I ruminate between two different lipsticks. Although there is no need for such deliberation, my choice has been set. My decision is predetermined. I select the one I know he would like, a creamy nude with a pink undertone. I know him so well.

He tells me I should start wearing orange more, pointing out how the color draws beauty to my bronzed skin. The orange takes on a subtle, sweet, peachy tone that is just so gentle, soothing, and serene. He likes me best when I am like this. Face painted and body draped to his liking, appealing to his unspoken command. A summery citrus image: poised and perfect and sitting quietly on his countertop. I am soft, pliable, and so, so forgiving. My heart and tongue and hands and feet all drowning in the color, wrapped tightly in a suffocating and thick orange peel. However, just like any fruit that has been neglected for far too long, I am beginning to rot on the inside.

I think I taste sour. I feel the newly familiar tang on my tongue, unpleasant like bitter melon and crab apples and forgotten mandarin oranges. The realization makes me feel uneasy. It makes me double-check that my lipstick is still in my purse and that my ochre headband is still secure and latched to my cascading black hair. I clutch the headband close to my body in efforts of eradicating the bitter taste on my tongue. I have to push these doubts away. It is my peel; it placates me and renders me silent. He always reminds me that it is my protection from these ugly thoughts that have begun to ebb their way into my mind.

I am very happy. He is very happy. We are very happy together.

Last week, we sat together and watched the sunset. The myriad of yellows and oranges were beginning to fade into darkness, and at that moment, I felt a twinge of apprehension and an uncharacteristic clarity wash over me. I told him how I felt in a hushed whisper. A shameful confession of my doubts as the world turned black. I told him that I love him. I love him very much, and I want him to be with me forever. But also, that I think an azure blue brings out the deep brown of my eyes more than orange does. I tell him that turquoise has been my favorite color since I was a little girl.

I told him that I taste sour.

He listened closely to my words, as if my speech was a spoken religion. Conviction presented in my voice, and doubt began to make its slow departure from my tongue. The previous uncertainty in the validity of my truth was replaced with confidence, although the uneasiness still made its presence known through the knot of anxiety that twisted grotesquely in my stomach. Then finally, my tongue slowed its pace, and my whirring mind calmed, and my heart surged with a newfound bravery. A conviction to advocate for myself and my happiness. We had lulled back into a quiet silence when he placed his toned arms around my neck, his palm caressing my tear-stained cheek. He pressed chaste kisses on my wet eyelashes and stole the nude lipstick from my chapped mouth. Then he told me he loved me.

"Orange suits you best, baby," he whispered, his voice a sickly sweet thing. "It makes you glow."

With his arms still enveloping my figure, he took a needle and thread between nimble, practiced fingers and precisely began to sew the skin of the unforgiving orange peel tighter where it had fallen loose around my body and soul. This time, he took extra precautions with the binding around my lips.

After that day, I pushed my doubts away, keeping them locked away in the pith of an orange, covering my miserable, rotting core with a pretty, sweet orange peel. My once burning conviction began to fizzle out until it was barely alight, flickering deep within some hidden corner of my soul. I am starting to think that this flame within myself is not enough to save me from my situation. If I even need to be saved... I love him deeply. I love how it was before, before I started rotting. When he would leave lingering tender touches all over my tanned skin and listen to my mind and fall in love with all of my convictions and beliefs and wants and desires. A time when I was so different from him. I suppose he loved the challenge of taming somebody burning as bright as me. Void of doubt and with a sense of sureness in myself that emanated from each bone and each freckle and indentation on my skin and peel.

I miss the way that I was. When sugary sweet orange juice poured from my tongue and heart and I held myself to every conviction and mercilessly sought out each of my joys and desires. Electric and neon and the color of traffic cones and a fiery hot sun in children's cartoons. Orange and full of life.

He would bring out a new version of myself in his companionship. In his presence, I became complacent and vulnerable and ready. Ready for new feelings, so exciting and so unbecoming that they overwhelmed me. After being bright and so fiercely independent for so long, his self-assured manner became so enticing and attractive to me. I was addicted to him and the vulnerable way he made me feel. He satiated my all-consuming want for more, more, more. And with him, I became orange like the color of ochre and wet sand and tangerines. Mellow and pliant like a doll under his control. He ravaged me. Slowly yet surely, what I initially thought would be an addition to my brightness turned into an erasure of my conviction and sureness.

Without notice, he altered me irrevocably. I realized my doubts, but before I could even fight back, I was trapped, stuck under the weight of his pale orange blankets. He numbed me, left me in a basket on his countertop, forever at his mercy. He soothed my doubts and told me that this vulnerability and control is what I wanted, what I needed. He repeated himself until even my barely burning conviction believed him and thought that perhaps maybe he knew what was best for me. And what is best for me is not azure blue, like the thread-worn sweatshirt that I would wear every day before he met me. My uneasiness and anxiety and grief were all tell-tale signs. The doubt overflowed and willed my feet to run and sprint away from the person who made my color fade so pale. But he took it in stride, convincing me as he whispered sweet nothings that I would so blindly believe, altering my once steadfast convictions. There was nothing other than him. I did not exist outside of us together under a sunset. And without a conviction and a yearning for more, I became complacent and comfortable.

These days, my makeup drawer is rather empty. I tend towards nude lipstick in the morning. Before bed, I never fail to check the citrus stitches covering my mouth and I suffocate my throat with a peel around my figure. Each night, I wonder if I'll ever find the strength to break free, or if I will remain trapped in this orange-hued prison forever.

I've Written This Poem 17 Times

Nadine Stoop

First, I wrote about love.

The fundamental of what people believe living is, complexity through to simplicity.

Second, I wrote about human nature.

Morals that surround us and hold our bodies to the grave.

Third, I wrote about painting.

Delicate strokes that cover a blank canvas, filled with the intricate imagination

Fourth, I wrote about dreams.

A small glimpse between imagination and reality, soft pillows and heavy heads

Fifth, I wrote of kindness.

Holding the door open for a stranger and smiling through all teeth.

Sixth, I wrote about hope.

Lead by faith or desire, questioning if fate takes all the reigns

Seventh, I wrote of mental health.

The tightrope between oxygen and CO2 soot. Red blood or blue.

Eighth, I wrote about loyalty

The same subway order since 6 or committing to always cherish life.

Ninth, I wrote of friends

Bonded from similar hallway routes, connected through similar hearts, mind and soul

Tenth, I wrote of validation

The need to exceed, to hear praises from bedrock to the heavens

Eleventh, I wrote about peace

Would this count as a dream? Could it maybe be real?

Twelfth, I wrote of time

Devoured by the whole yet the table still remains just as full.

Thirteenth, I wrote about flowers

Blossomed in the spring showers, roots hugging the soil, head to the sky

Fourteenth, I wrote of family

My mothers embrace, my fathers wits, my brothers shielding, home
are people

Fifteenth, I wrote about freedom

Words allowed to be unshackled, actions followed by want through to
need

Sixteenth, I wrote of respect

Defined by dignity, earned and never given, hold your head up high

On my seventeenth try I realized that I have not yet found the ending
to my poems.

Goodbye

Allison Chiasson

I know you're very busy,
On the last day there's no time,
Lots of kids want to say goodbye,
Including this one of mine,

It feels like just a blink ago,
They first walk through your door,
Since then, apart the holiday,
Six hours a day, They were yours,

You've listened to our stories,
Given praise for picture drawn,
Encourage and admired,
Set boundaries, Cheered us on,

You've survived squeaky recorders,
Trips and coaching, nativity plays,
Swimming, cooking ,experiment ,
One mile run and dress-up days,

They've made wonderful friendships,
Learn to always try their best,
How to cope when things go wrong,
That it's - just a test,

It's not a easy job,
To keep kids learning and inquiring,
You've done so much for all of us,
By teaching and inspiring,

As you leave today,
I see your face wipe tears,
Know that we will miss you,
As you must do this year,

So, today, we will take a moment,
On your final one,
We thank you for your grateful heart,
For all you have done,

It's time for you to leave,
We must say our last goodbye,
You gave us roots and wings,
Now we're ready to fly,

