



Gwendolyn Brooks Youth Poetry Awards 2020



UCHICAGO **Arts**

Honorable Mention Entries



KINDERGARTEN (page: 3)

“Two Dollars” by Data Hunting – The Children’s School, Forest Park

2ND GRADE (page: 4)

“Ice Rink” by Luke Hong – Avery Coonley, Elmhurst

3RD GRADE (pages: 5)

“Wait and Wish” by Daniel Hyde – Lake Forest Country Day School, Northfield

4TH GRADE (page: 6)

“World of Light” by Megan Pham – Fairview South School, Skokie

6TH GRADE (pages: 7 - 8)

“I Remember” by Daniela Kasalo – Fairview South School, Skokie, IL, Skokie
“We Shall Overcome” by Vedansh Wadhvani – Fairview South School, Skokie, IL, Skokie

7TH GRADE (pages: 9 - 11)

“Writing to Reality” by Natasha Stoper Freidman – Ancona School, Chicago
“Wind” by Liron Helmer – Midwest Academy for Gifted Education, Skokie

8TH GRADE (page: 12)

“Girl” by Eleanor Ross – Alcott College Prep, Chicago

9TH GRADE (pages: 13 - 14)

“Climbing Trees” by Nico Crabtree – The Chicago High School for the Arts, Chicago
“you don’t need a body to bury something” by Annie Wu – Walter Payton College Prep, Chicago

10TH GRADE (page: 15)

“Living With Purpose” by Holly Wood – Crystal Lake Central High School, Crystal Lake

For more information and to submit a poem, visit ilhumanities.org/poetry.
If you have questions, contact Mark Hallett at mark.hallett@ilhumanities.org.



Gwendolyn Brooks Youth Poetry Awards 2020



UCHICAGO **Arts**

Honorable Mention Entries



11TH GRADE (page: 16)

"My Name Is Madison and Yours Probably Is Too" by Madison Sniegowski – Oswego East High School, Aurora

12TH GRADE (pages: 17 - 18)

"Bastards" by Jasmine Connolly – Dixon High School, Dixon
"Or Don't" by Aimee R. – Nancy B. Jefferson High School, Chicago

For more information and to submit a poem, visit ilhumanities.org/poetry.
If you have questions, contact Mark Hallett at mark.hallett@ilhumanities.org.

Two Dollars

There were two dollars
They had a conversation
About their feelings

Ice Rink

Blades scraping on the ice,
Teachers giving students advice.
Little boys and girls twirling around,
To the jazzy, funky, and playful sound.
Kids performing tricks on the slippery surface,
And little Emma skates the furthest!
Skating, twisting, and turning about,
“2 more laps to go!” The instructor shouts.
Meanwhile on the other ice rink,
The sticks go: “clackety dink!”
The puck goes swirling around,
Bang! Crash! Number 76 topples down.

Wait and Wish

I am hardworking and determined.
I wonder when I will be at school again.
Playing football with my friends, in the blossoming park,
Or sledding down the hill, in the chilly winter.

I miss having lunch with my friends,
Deep in conversation.

I hear the insects chirp outside my room while studying.
I see my garden from my window and long to be at school.

Delicious meals of steak fill my mind as I dream of being at a restaurant.

I feel my book as I sit, reading endlessly.
I worry that quarantine will never end, lying down on my bed
After a day of hard work.

I dream of slicing the water when the pools open.
Free in the cool water, at last.

World of Light

Space glows like a firefly.
Sparkling stars shine and traverse
through the tender universe.
It is a painting that can just hypnotize you.
Reach for stars.
Space is infinite.
The moon lights up like a lamp
Its pure white gleams blinds you.
Space is breathtaking as the
Milky Way leaves you with a face of surprise.
Sometimes, when you feel melancholy,
all you have to do is look
at the colors around you.

I Remember

I remember the hot concrete against my feet.
The blue pool water splashing everywhere as I jumped in.
When I walked out of the pool, the warm air turned
into an icy breeze, slapping me in the face.
I remember the juicy hamburger that I ate at a restaurant
close to the beach.
Its juiciness made me want to devour every last bite of it.
We went to the gift shop and I saw the most beautiful bracelet.
It had radiant round beads and glistening charms.
Its colors were just like the cool and breezy beach everyone loves.
The emerald green, dark blue, and sky blue.

We Shall Overcome

I
stand
there, next
to the Washington
monument. A giant
obelisk, shining in the
sun's hopeful Light
which peeks through
the dark clouds. The
voice of Martin Luther
King Jr. rumbles through
the audience. He inspires
us by slicing the darkness
using the blade of hope
that he gives us. We will
overcome the darkness
not because we are strong
and intelligent, not because
we crush our enemies, but
because we have hope and
we befriend our enemies
and help them see the light.

This poem was inspired by the painting *We Shall Overcome* by Lois Mailou Jones.

writing to reality
By: natasha stoper friedman

henry dumas, 1934 to 1968
age 33,
writes a letter to himself,
talks about
when he dies,
he wants to be remembered
for his
writing.

the circumstances are
unclear
but
but we know
we know that
as he was walking through
a turnstile,
a turnstile in a new york city train station,
his life ended.

how it happened
was shocking,
was disgusting,
fills people with rage,
with sympathy,
with frustration,
he
was shot
by a
new york city transit policeman.

afterward
his writer friends
at the party
toni morrison
threw for him

sitting and talking
about his achievements,
just as he wanted,
laughing and smiling
while crying
inside.

they were talking
about
his books
which
were
about racial tension,
about white supremacy,
even about science fiction,
they were talking
about his life,
not his
death.

Wind

Wind is the earth's breath when it is lying down for sleep.

Wind sounds like nature's whistle rippling through the forest.

Wind looks like an arrow splitting the air.

Wind remembers when the earth was forming, and the ground was rising.

Wind is a memory of a time when the earth was empty and covered with forests.

Girl

Some days, it can be nice to forget that I am here,
Too.
To mistake myself for what can be changed.

Girl is
powdered sugar,
pixie sticks without tang, or,
even slight unpleasantness
of paper packaging left to dissolve on the tongue.

I am told:
Girl sheds. Shedding, peeling, sticky
paper layer,

Nuisance.

Wonder why
I have never really been able to get rid of the tang,
or the paper, or whatever turns mouths blue.

I imagine this
longing of girl lingering. And the music—
Kim Deal's voice like smoke on lemon,
dancing, rosy cheeked,
sunlight humming on skin.
These things are loyal--

Never to let hair fall loose out of pig tails, even
when skin folds into prune.

This, I forget, is also the skin of a girl.
An extension.

It can be nice to remember
that I am there,
Too.

Climbing Trees

*“The tree’s were always permanent. They
were access to the aether, but still deeply
rooted in the ground.”*

—Brit Marling

A place forgotten. Memories
shattered like glass, cutting through
thin-skinned hands that scrape this sidewalk
on a street I know I will leave.

I asked my father
for climbing trees
every time we moved.
Trees where my small feet can push
off the dry moss and fly like dust,
becoming one with this streaming
air I breathe.

Trees where I
can climb to the top and
feel held by these solid branches.

Trees where I
inhale the divine wind
that's given to me by the
aether, and I still
feel grounded through these roots.

Trees that,
can still stand tall in my mind
despite the chaos of
a scattered assortment
of recollection.

And I can remember a split second
where I felt cosmic.

you don't need a body to bury something

I.

i like to picture that eternity is the absence of
some people say it wears the face of death
bloody and devouring; neverending
maybe that's why grief is so daunting
the concept of loss in five stages
never done for once
always repeated in rebirth and recycle
eternity in grief and loving people that no longer know it
love isn't supposed to be a finite resource
I guess that's why it's so caught up in death.

II.

the sun is forgiving, honey sweet, almost golden
snow blankets in powdery layers
(I wonder if the ash of Pompeii looked like this when it buried bodies.)
grief slips into cracks and widens them in chasms.
the clock does not stop ticking.

III.

life goes on, after a newspaper obituary,
or as close to one there is these days
they only gain passing sympathy from a silent stranger
there is loss in that too.
maybe there's a funeral some lost summer day—

IV.

death does not chase after bodies
I suppose it's strange anyways, the idea of a coffin
who would've of thought:
another box to fit in.

V.

mourn too, beyond a graveyard
I am mourning every time I gaze into a mirror
childhood has always been less of a skin to shed
and more of something to bury.

They say
To seize the day
For the time will pass regardless
And you choose how you use it
Is the answer to lay around and sit
Playing digital games and watching Netflix
Or is there something more important in life
Than GTA and stabbing someone's avatar with a knife
Reload, reset, enter game
These words mark a new start
Another chance for users to play the part
But life has no controller
What is done is done the past has passed
Every day waking up is a miracle that is never guaranteed to last
They fear that an un-lived life is more terrifying than death itself
Just another deficient fifteen-page novel lying on a shelf
They are wise
For your troubles are troubles which dying men yearn for
Your exploits are birthed from choices you deplore
Regrets stand by faulty actions you have made
Yet acting was not the fault which causes the dismay
So before you need be reminded of why you shan't delay
Do as they say
Seize the day

My Name is Madison and Yours Probably Is Too

My name is Madison,
bet you haven't heard that one before.
Madison means "son of Matthew"
when really it should mean "daughter of everyone".
So what's it mean to be named Madison on the off chance that you're not?

It means that you know at least six other people who share your name
and you are probably friends with three of them.
It means never turning around when your name is called
because you know you're not popular enough for them to actually mean you.
It means hearing someone ask "Which Madison?"
and hearing someone else answer "The blond one".
And as if it couldn't get any worse,
they still don't know which one.
It means searching for what makes you stand out
a lot earlier than everyone else
as you automatically lack the uniqueness many are born with.
It means a sub asks the class if all the Madisons are here
and just like that you become a group instead of a person.

So, would I change my name, my first form of identity?
No, I would not.
I am not basic even though my name may be.
I may have been forced into a group, but aren't we all?
Changing my name won't change me.
So, to all you Madisons out there
(and there certainly are a lot),
you are not basic just because your name is.
Next time you find yourself trapped in the prison that is your identity,
Remember that the cage that confines us
does not define us.
We are what makes us feel free.

Bastards:

My sentences are children.
Tiny, helpless,
Little bastards
Whose fathers I never met.

I get around with verbs
Sleep with nouns, adjectives.
Linguistic slut.
Never the same one.

I carry my sentences in my skull.
Nowhere near soft, there.
Calcified cranium.
They find no comfort, no warmth.

I do not love all of my children.
Some disappoint
Hopeless infants
Sown by bum fathers; sloth begets sloth.

Some cave under the pressure.
I demand perfection; accept nothing less.
Impossible standards.
I am not a kind mother.

Or Don't

She's flying solo
feet don't stop for nobody
free the mind from this xanax bared cell
to fall is to drown in a promethazine pool of bitterness
turn around...
you forgot your baby's father
he's too deep
he's drowning
you can't bare to leave him so you drown with him
you found someone your feet are worth stopping for

why can't you stop for yourself
you can't find anything to love
look harder
why can other people see your beauty but you can't
be okay with being alone
be okay with yourself . . .
but how
where do I start when I can't escape this cell
free me from my mind
no
free yourself
or don't
even hell gets comfortable..

