

Poetry Contest

Thank you to all who entered our third annual Creative Minds Poetry Contest! We received nearly 200 poems, and the high quality of the entries made the judging very difficult. We are thrilled to publish the winners here. Please visit our website at <http://cty.jhu.edu/imagine/creativemindscontest/contestresults.html> to read the second- and third-place poems, as well as those that received Honorable Mentions.

First Place, Ages 14 and Under

Here's To You, Romeo

by Ivy Zheng

I heard you kiss by the book,
But you're no modern day
Love story prince who
Sweeps me away.

This is a tragedy.
It's a bittersweet novel
With tears on the cover
And the last two pages
Missing.

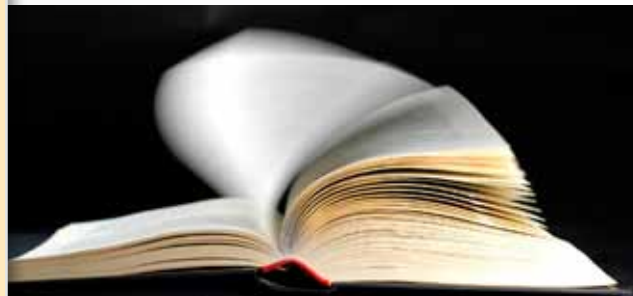
Yet I kept reading on,
Hoping that we could have
Another ending instead,
With a happily
And an ever
And an after

But our fate was already
Sold from the beginning
And I'm sorry, but
We're stuck as star-cross'd.
So it's not as if
I expected anything
From the beginning.

Really.



Ivy Zheng is a sophomore at Canyon High School in California. She loves all things creative—including writing novels and lyrics, studying fashion, and photography. Ivy enjoys playing tennis and spending free time with friends. Her dreams include becoming a published author and attending Wharton Business School.



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Second Place

Us by Shelby Burke, 14, NJ

Third Place

The Lake by Julia Rathmann-Bloch, 10, CA

Honorable Mentions

Five Girls in a Tent on a Stormy Night

by Brooke Helder, 13, MI

Poetry As It Emerges

by David Rathmann-Bloch, 13, CA

Museum

by Camille Petersen, 14, NJ

Judge's comments:

"Here's To You, Romeo," is more than a witty take on the famous Shakespearean play *Romeo and Juliet*. The tone and perspective of this poem allow the literary allusion of star-crossed lovers to transcend into a clever contemporary internal monologue. References like "I heard you kiss by the book" combine with "It's a bittersweet novel/ With tears on the cover/ And the last two pages/ Missing" to create a dramatic contrast that is layered and thought-provoking. The intentional twists on the classic tale are sharp and consistent, providing the reader with an unobstructed glimpse into the speaker's mind. The use of voice and subtle sarcasm ground the poem, allowing the final lines, "So it's not as if/ I expected anything/ From the beginning./ Really," to resonate long after the poem has physically ended.

First Place, Ages 15–18

Escape

by Emily Rutherford

The air smells of suburbia in summer:
sunshine, hot dogs, and lawn clippings.

The sweet rain of the sprinkler
falls gently on the prone forms
of two intrepid travelers.

They have been to Mars and back
this afternoon. How lovely,
to once again feel the familiar
prickle of grass at their backs.

Alien planets are all well and good,
but this Rock circling the sun is ours.

Though they both know this is a fact,
neither speaks of it.

They only speak of leaving,
not returning.



Emily Rutherford is a sophomore at the Bryn Mawr School for Girls in Baltimore, MD. She runs cross-country and track, and has been a competitive swimmer since age six. She has been writing fiction since age four. She loves reading and writing and aspires to become a surgeon.



About our Judge:

Katherine Cottle received her MFA in creative writing from the University of Maryland at College Park. Her work has appeared in many literary magazines, including *Poetry East*, *Willow Springs*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Tar River Poetry*, *The Pinch*, and *The Greensboro Review*. Her chapbook, *My Father's Speech*, was released by Apprentice House Press in January 2008. She lives in Glen Arm, MD, with her husband, two children, two dogs, and a cat.

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Second Place

Lottery

by Theophilus Kwek, 15, Singapore

Third Place

Time

by Nol Swaddiwudhipong, 15, Singapore

Honorable Mentions

Portraits

by Jessie Li, 16, PA

Native Spring

by Erica Cervantes, 16, PA

For Darfur: Finding Love

by Asia Rei Ayabe, 17, HI

Judge's comments:

"*Escape*" is truly an escape—from the expected, the everyday, and the conventional linear viewpoint. The writer is able to capture the intangible aspects of imagination with fresh and original details, such as "How lovely,/ to once again feel the familiar/ prickle of grass at their backs." The language is clear and concise, providing just enough information for the reader to identify with the travelers as they reminisce about their metaphorical afternoon journey to Mars. The final line of the poem, "They only speak of leaving, / not returning," holds an eye-opening honesty, exposing the innate nature of longing and, in an ironic turn, the desire for poetry to continue on this same search for the extraordinary qualities of our ordinary world.