

POETRY CONTEST WINNERS 2009

Please
enjoy these
winning
entries from
Word Wise,
KDL's 6th Annual
Teen Poetry Contest.

These winners were
chosen from close
to 200 poems.
With topics from love and
loss to city life, there is bound
to be something in here for you.

A large, white quill pen is positioned diagonally across the page, resting in a small, dark glass inkwell. The background is a warm, golden-yellow gradient.

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CLAIRE DE LUNE

She is grace.

She is passion.

She is the subtle, quiet whisper in his ear pleading

Write my song.

Make me live again.

And he wrote.

His fingers flew over the keys.

The music filled the room and she lived again.

She danced again as the music swelled.

She smiled again as he played.

Her blue eyes shone again.

She lived again.

Debussy loved again.

AUTHOR: MOLLY TIESMA

THE INVISIBLE CIRCLE

I pace the perimeter of the play structure, My hands, tightened into furious fists, hang stone still, clamped straight at my sides, There's an invisible circle Like an electric fence, it snakes its way around the innocent slides, and swings, Separating me, from them, The freak, from the so-called normal world, There's an invisible circle To any onlooker, the scene looks ordinary, No wall, no nothing, But I know what's there, And so do they, After all, they built it There's an invisible circle It wasn't there before, Or maybe I was just blind to that inhumane structure, That cruel wall of silly insecurities and fears, There's an invisible circle We used to get along perfectly fine, Then, one day, I suddenly wasn't "cool" enough The circle had been drawn, I didn't belong there anymore, There's an invisible circle You've probably seen one before, A simple division between the popular, And the nerdy, geeky, dorky, tweeby not-so-popular, Next time you see one, Cut the chain, Break the trend Break the invisible circle

AUTHOR: ANNIE LIVINGSTON

I MISS YOU

As I stand here
looking down
at this marble stone
here among the graves
I see your name
I hold back the tears
and I talk to you
as if you were there
beside me again
one more time
one last thing
I miss you.

I could talk to you
you never laughed
you always knew
just what to say
I miss you.

It brings me back
to happier times
where we would sit
on that swing
and talk about things
I miss you.

I still remember
the day I found out
I told myself
it could not be true
but it was
I miss you.

And that day
at your funeral
I saw Grandma
take that flag
with tears in her eyes
I miss you.

Now it is time to go
and I say it one more time
I love you Grandpa
and I miss you.

I get in the car
we drive away
and life becomes real
but for a moment
it was as if you were there
I miss you.

AUTHOR: KAREN ERGANG

CONSPIRACY THEORY”

homework- on the bus

sweater- in the closet

lunchbox- on the kitchen counter

zipper- stuck open

locker- stuck shut

It's only Monday.

AUTHOR: KATIE VAN ZANEN

CITY NIGHT

Flashing lights
the whir of sirens
cars honking
rushing by
A flow of people
some striding purposefully
late for something important
others meandering slowly
simultaneously obfuscating the
sidewalk
The smell of smoke wafting
from travelers ahead
mingling with the smells
exuded by the street
and the passing bus's exhaust
Air thickening
along with congestion
sticking to skin
invading pores
overtaking deodorant
to make all feel sticky

Teetering at the edge
of a streetcurb
waiting for the light
to change
not daring to weave
around the angry cars
It never sleeps
never stops
the ebb and flow
the blur of millions
of lives briefly meeting
then going on their way
The curtains close
to shutter the lights
the air inside is clean
and cool and crisp
Falling asleep
to raging horns
and the desperate
sound of sirens

AUTHOR: GRACE FEENSTRA

BREATHE IN.

The clock strikes midnight as I
hang up the phone.
Breathe out.

Breathe in.
I am so tired.
Tired in my mind,
Tired in my body,
And tired in my heart
Breathe out.

Breathe in.
I haven't got the time
To sit around and wait
For you.
Breathe out.

Breathe in.
I remember your eyes
Your beautiful brown eyes
Always smiling back at me
But that's a distant memory,
Never forgotten
Breathe out.

Breathe in.
Now I sit here,
Waiting for something, but not
you
I think I'm waiting for change,
but that'll never be.
Breathe out.

AUTHOR: HALEY SMITH

HAIKUS OF YOU

The idea of you
Distance preserves perfection
If only you knew.

I know I'm crazy
But my imagination
Runs 'way with itself.

The idea of me
Buffering screen makes me seem
Clever and witty.

Or does it reveal
My vulnerability,
My want to be liked?

How do you perceive
This other version of me?
Cut, paste, and erase.

Manipulation:
Though the past preserves mistakes,
We can start again.

Mathematical
You plus me equals something?
Not Available.

I hold your sure face
But time begins to erase
Now how did it look?

AUTHOR: B. JOANNA CHEN

"I THINK- MY BROTHER IS A ROBOT"

I think-

My brother is a robot

I do tend to wonder...

For him it's the same old thing.

Day,

After day,

After day.

He wakes up a six,

Showers,

Eats,

And departs

All without a word.

The car pulls up

Parked perfectly

Like a machine...

Always at four

On the dot.

He returns

Without a word

He slowly walks

To our basement.

Comes up five hours later.

In a monotone voice

He says

"Enjoy your hours of darkness."

No smile,

No emotion

Not expecting to see us until morning

He walks back downstairs

He stays there all night

At least for all I know,

I wake in the morning,

See him lying there,

In bed, where he starts the lonely
cycle, Day after day after day.

My brother is not quite a robot

He is so much more...

He is my best friend...

AUTHOR: ERIC SCHROEDER

NIGHTFIRES – A SEQUENCE OF HAIKUS

Frozen winds slap my
Cheeks. I shiver, yet my soul
Is warmed by wonder:

Veils of fire move
Like water rippling in an
Ocean of black sky.

Some red, some yellow,
Some blue...all colors here in
A broken rainbow.

Dance for me, ice-lights!
Color the darkness, you
Cold saints of cold nights.

Are you God's painting?
Are you the robes of angels,
Sewn by the hot sun?

Are you spirits, once
Warm, now cold and glorious,
Swimming at Earth's crown?

I am alone. I
Am but a heartbeat that slows
With each sweet second.

These ponderings warm
My spirit, but my body
As icy as the

Glacier under my
Back. These bones are but human.
They can stay here, but

Nightfires, let my soul
Join your ranks as the brightest
Thread in night's blanket.

If this is to be
My wint'ry end, then let me
Sleep with you on my

Eyes. Let my last sight
Be glorious; of Hell or
Heaven, I know not.

I'm truly tired
Now, and too worn to fear what
Waits for me at end.

My eyes wish to close.
Bitter sleep is near. My heart
Is slow, slow, slow...but

I look skyward one
Last time, just as tears of cold
Freeze upon my cheeks.

AUTHOR: EMILY OXFORD

ON TOP OF THE DUNE

Through my young, brown eyes
I could not comprehend the way the dune
slowly tumbled into the lake that waited
what seemed like miles below.
I stood in my slightly damp swimsuit
with sand crusted to my legs and hair
as I watched my brother and sister stride
down the way.
My feet started too,
no longer content to burn on the hot
granules below them.
I tried to avoid stumbling,
but my steps too often caught.
Still we strived for the rest giving lake which
fell open as a second sun-splitting sky.
And we are still running.

AUTHOR: HANNAH FLEMING

HONORABLE MENTION

STILL

Alone
in the still
and silence
Cell phone temporarily
pressed to mute
TV's high definition
picture a blur
of black
The lights shuttered
like the ones in
a stadium that are
extinguished to silence
after a loud game
No internet commentary
streaming from 7 continents
No noise detectable
to the human ear
Just a blanket of
silence
Dust falling and
settling to the floor
Alone
in the still
and silence
No noises
only a symphony of thoughts.

AUTHOR: GRACE FEENSTRA

Kent District Library would like to thank David Cope for his work in selecting the winning poems. Mr. Cope currently teaches drama and creative writing at Grand Rapids Community College. Mr. Cope's personal publications include:

QUIET LIVES (1983)

ON THE BRIDGE (1986)

FRAGMENTS FROM THE STARS (1990)

COMING HOME (1993)

SILENCES FOR LOVE (1998)

TURN THE WHEEL (2003)