



## **SECOND PLACE, COLLEGE:**

### **FOUND AT CUT-FACE CREEK ALONG THE NORTH SHORE**

Scraps of letters  
Written long ago,  
Now tattered.

The metallic sheen  
Of a beer can,  
Tossed aside.

Half-empty blue ink cartridges,  
The remains  
Of an artist's tool.

Found among the rocks and pebbles,  
Echoes of desperate,  
Sorrowful songs.

Memories left behind.

The remains of the few  
Who could withstand  
The deafening silence of the wind.

The lovers. The alcoholics. The poets...

The truth lies  
Amidst the all-consuming cold,  
In the whispering wind.

**Olivia Dahl**  
Hugo, MN  
Dordt University, Sioux Center

### THIRD PLACE, COLLEGE:

#### SHAME

Curling magazines mop up the  
tequila scattering its sticky impulse over the  
hard countertop. Each Thursday—  
the floor burns anew with the  
flush of angry faces and rhythms as  
emotion is made mighty in movement.

At four in the morning the dimness of the street  
settles like the heaving of the gut at the stench  
of the loose-bound Bible by the bed.

Shame stings like the searing pulse of snowflakes  
clustering the eye's lashes, tracing  
the unsuspecting neckline  
when propriety lets loose its load  
down your back.

There's nothing you can do but lurch in sleep,  
damping the cigarette glow with  
the toe of your boot  
as secondhand smoke from the Sunday service  
fills your lungs  
like winter's breath.

**Lael Bervig**  
Park Rapids, MN  
Dordt University, Sioux Center

**FIRST PLACE, HIGH SCHOOL:**

**MY EYES HURT**

The sky after a salt rain  
— a drooping monsoon after a dry spell —  
Has the texture of a wrung kitchen sponge.  
The cacti are unfurling haltingly between needles  
And waxy shells, deformed satin crimson petals scatter,  
A flood of maroon snowdrops, outing  
The sun-drenched pistil of an extinct  
Bloom. Dry pores vein and  
Crack every rain until the clouds  
Arrive seasonally, twisting and needling, stretching, mangling  
Like the thing at the bottom of the kitchen sink  
Tired, growing nothing but mold.

**Athena Wu**, Grade 11  
Iowa City West High School, Iowa City  
Kerri Barnhouse, Teacher

**SECOND PLACE, HIGH SCHOOL:**

**THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH A BRA**

You can make a blindfold  
so that you do not see  
when you play hide and seek.

You can wear it  
so that you can feel all grown up

You can feel grown up,  
maybe too much too soon.

You can wish yours was a different size  
and criticize your unfiltered mirror's reflection.

You can show it  
because he asked you to.

You can have it taken off of you.  
You're really grown up now, aren't you?

You can make a blindfold  
so that you do not see  
while you hide

and he seeks.

**Josie Handlos**, Grade 10  
Atlantic High School, Atlantic  
Allison Berryhill, Teacher

### THIRD PLACE. HIGH SCHOOL:

#### RIDDLE-LEE-TUM

What do you call a liar that always seems to win? A child, a fool,  
A boy without a heart. I danced to impress him, drew flowers  
And drew blood, but the stupidest decision, was deciding not to run.

By run I mean, as fast and long and hard  
Away from this stupid, broken boy's glass shards.  
Maybe he couldn't help it, scraping inside my heart  
"I'm trapped in here!" I wanted to scream, but he knew it from the start.

He watched me as I sobbed in pain, clutching at my heart  
He'd taken it, and made for me, a necklace of its parts.  
"Don't you like it?" he whispered softly in my ear  
Bending down, his blue eyes, liquid: bright and clear.

He didn't flinch, no not one bit, as my ears they turned all red,  
Shame filled my face and then soon fear, it filled my head.  
And sure enough my heart was there, crumpled in his hands  
Strings attached the bloody parts, holes with dripping dots of red.

His face bemused, then a smile played slow across his lips  
"Isn't this what you wanted? I offered you the moon and stars,  
But you said '*bejewel my heart instead.*'"

I could not cry for anything for I knew it was my fault,  
I placed inside a little boy's hands what should be inside a vault.

**Sophie Boehmler**, Grade 11  
Homeschool, Sumner  
Rebecca Boehmler, Teacher

**FIRST PLACE, UPPER GRADES:**

**SONG OF THE DANDELIONS**

Dandelion, rooted yet free, teach me  
All your deepest sung secrets  
Blooms of woven twilight, sweet moonlight of the valley  
Rays outshining even the daintiest of daffodils  
You must have thoughts, like me, but you let go  
So easily; every little trouble drifting softly into the breeze  
You are a weed, yet you are loved by the light  
By the west winds that welcome you with tender whispers  
As you grace the earth with not an ounce of regret  
You flourish, then you burst, a serenade of shooting stars  
Continuing the pattern; *your eternal song*

**Penelope Fennell**, Grade 8  
Grinnell Middle School, Grinnell  
Matt Griffen, Teacher

**SECOND PLACE, UPPER GRADES:**

**FRAGMENTS**

Time itself withers my hands  
My bones are frail  
In the midst of time  
Pricking my skin  
Deep and rich fluid flows

Bandaging myself with memories  
Patched up with past dreams  
All I can think is how it used to be  
Soon all the memories flow  
Leaving me alone with my past

Fragments of the past washing up  
Creating a vivid image in my mind  
Should I go back?  
Or am I right where I need to be?  
I will stay  
I can just be

**Piper Redman**, Grade 7  
Baxter Community Schools, Baxter  
Katie Kibby, Teacher



**THIRD PLACE, UPPER GRADES:**

**OVERTHINKER**

Sitting in my bed  
Choking on my words  
I ask myself,  
“Why am I so misunderstood?”  
“Is it my writing?”  
“The way I talk?”  
But for a second I realize,  
I overthink a lot.

**Olivia Parrie, Grade 6**  
Baxter Community Schools, Baxter  
Katie Kibby, Teacher

**FIRST PLACE, LOWER GRADES:**

**SNOW DRESS**

Looking out the window the sun shone.  
I noticed the still white ground.

The snow was as sparkly as a diamond,  
A diamond I could not wait to wear.

I could wear the snow after playing,  
A dress that would twinkle on me.

**Lucy Munson**, Grade 2  
Cardinal Elementary, Maquoketa  
Jenna Spain and Andrea Dostal, Teachers

**SECOND PLACE, LOWER GRADES:**

Pianos sing songs  
To anyone who'd listen  
Quiet so you'll hear.

**Tia Keller, Grade 4**  
North Hill Elementary, Burlington  
Julie Russell and Beth Junker, Teachers

**THIRD PLACE, LOWER GRADES:**

**THE HEIRESS**

There once was a girl from Paris,  
Who liked to dance on her terrace.  
She would spin and twirl,  
then she would hurl,  
which was really quite gross for an heiress.

**Avery Irish**, Grade 4  
Black Hawk Elementary, Burlington  
Julie Russell and Teri Jo Lane, Teachers