

The background is a vibrant blue color. At the top, the word "poems" is written in a white, cursive script. Below it, the entire page is filled with a complex pattern of overlapping, hand-drawn yellow lines that form various abstract shapes and loops, resembling a scribble or a doodle.

*poems*

# parkmont poetry festival

Poems by District of Columbia Students

Grades 6-12

SPONSORED BY PARKMONT SCHOOL, MAY 4, 2013



## PREFACE

We are pleased to share with you in this booklet the poems of Washington, DC's young writers. The Parkmont Poetry Festival was founded in 1982 to recognize the literary gifts of young poets from our diverse schools and neighborhoods and to celebrate their common interest in poetry. This year we proudly celebrate 31 years of spotlighting and sharing their talents and their unique perspectives on their worlds.

We received over 400 poems for this year's Festival from students in grades 6 through 12 in the District's public, private, and charter schools. Our judges have selected these 40 distinguished poems from the chorus of young voices expressing their spirits and vitality through poetry.



## 2013 POETRY AWARD WINNERS

William Sanders <b>The Taste of Poetry</b> .....	1
Grace Jessett <b>Calypso</b> .....	2
Harry Kay <b>Statue</b> .....	3
Andrew Byrd <b>The Sculptor</b> .....	4
Jackson Wolfire <b>Imprisoned Polar Bear</b> .....	5
Ivette Lagual <b>Poem to mi padre</b> .....	6
James Orfini <b>My Sister</b> .....	7
Lucas Rudd <b>Lifecycle of a Tuna</b> .....	8
Amanda Hillware <b>Not Yet...</b> .....	9
Peter Berg <b>Redcap</b> .....	10, 11
Sasha Stinson <b>My Last Memory</b> .....	12
Kayla Brown <b>Beautiful Pain</b> .....	13
Rachel Blatt <b>Through the Window</b> .....	14
Keterina Clacks <b>Women</b> .....	15
Seané Hamiel <b>Body Moving</b> .....	16
Ellie Forman <b>And Also With You</b> .....	17
Raffi Ohanian <b>The Cold Winds Still Blow</b> .....	18-20
Shanay Howard <b>Sidewalk</b> .....	21
Clara Pierson <b>Remembrance</b> .....	22
Matthias Kelley <b>Forsythia</b> .....	23
Desean Forrest <b>I Don't See It Yet</b> .....	24, 25
Jaquelin Weymouth <b>Sir Allan von Schniedersburg</b> <b>Fredrickson Zame</b> .....	26-29
DeShayla Bullock <b>Family Jewel</b> .....	30
Maria Gonzalez Merino <b>Farming</b> .....	31
Philip DiMeglio <b>The jump</b> .....	32
Tala Jordan <b>I Implode</b> .....	33
Shavar Clarke <b>Mixed Feelings</b> .....	34-35
Joe Dahut <b>Fox</b> .....	36
Tomas Rodriguez <b>Nature</b> .....	37
Ladeisha Meriweather <b>My Hair</b> .....	38
Jimmy Davis <b>Third Grade</b> .....	39
Tyrell Johnson <b>Get It Together</b> .....	40
Kayla Rosemond <b>The Essence of a Dream</b> .....	41, 42
Sophie Horst <b>Sparrow</b> .....	43
Lidya Demissie <b>10 Ways of Looking at my T.V.</b> .....	44
Miriam Macias <b>Stop the Bullying</b> .....	45
Richard M. Planning <b>Hectic Hallways</b> .....	46
Kee'Shawn Murphy <b>Stronger than me</b> .....	47
Abigail Bartram <b>Dreamer</b> .....	48
Jordan Harris Reid <b>The Park Poetic</b> .....	49



# THE TASTE OF POETRY

Oh poetry,  
how sweet and spicy you are  
you taste so good  
with cheese and beef  
the lettuce and melted cheese  
that you substitute  
by giving yourself away  
to my mouth  
you are so good  
a century could go by  
and I'd still taste  
you in my mouth  
Oh poetry, you are  
the toppings on my taco

**William Sanders**, Grade 9  
*Ballou Senior High School*

## CALYPSO

His forbidden ripeness tempted me,  
Hypnotized me;

I was a snake dancing to a  
Mysterious melody.  
I devoured his fragrant beauty;  
His succulent sweetness entranced me,  
Infected me.  
His icy sterility wavered.  
But the rancid heart festered within,  
Spitting me out like venom.

Our contaminated love slithered away,  
Spoilt and stale.  
Frost-bitten,  
Alone with my withered memory.  
Barren.

**Grace Jessett**, Grade 11  
*British School of Washington*

## STATUE

The world rushes on past me,  
But I stay as I am, indifferent to change.  
To me, time seems to pass slowly,  
Every second is a minute, every minute an hour, every hour a  
day,  
So I have plenty of time to reflect on my life,  
Or the lives of the people I see hurrying past.  
Could this be a metaphor? I think.  
For I know much about metaphors, living as long as I have.  
Could I be a metaphor? Could we all? I think.  
As the unresponsive world flits past me,  
Like a butterfly with a purpose, like the tide going out.

**Harry Kay**, Grade 6  
Sidwell Friends School

## THE SCULPTOR

It was praised  
All over the city  
All over the world  
The sculpture he made  
It was a simple marble figure of himself  
The world loved it  
They bought it  
They made replicas  
But one day where his original piece stood  
The sculptor destroyed it  
He broke it down until it was unrecognizable  
And he walked away pleased with himself  
The world didn't understand why he did it  
For what he made was invaluable  
Special  
But the sculptor knew it wasn't himself  
He molded the sculpture into what the world wanted to see  
Not what he wanted  
And for that he hated it  
Through all the fame and through all the glory  
He saw that it wasn't the world's opinion that counted  
Because when you turn yourself into what the world wants to  
see  
You're like his sculpture  
Motionless  
Frozen  
And fake  
For the sculptor didn't destroy his sculpture for fame  
He destroyed it because it was time he molded himself on his  
own standards  
For a person manufactured by the world is simply a single  
word  
FAKE

**Andrew Byrd**, Grade 8  
*Calvary Christian Academy*

## **IMPRISONED POLAR BEAR**

Polar bear in a car.

White, blue, grey.

Bear looking out car window.

Police officer radioing for help.

Just standing there, looking at the grey sky.

He has a colorful uniform, black, red, silver, blue, white.

Very shiny badge.

Bear looks helpless in car.

Poor bear.

Fluffy paws spread on a window, trying to get out.

His eyes are small, round, creased with worry.

Officer looks grouchy, like he didn't have his morning coffee.

Where's his donut?

**Jackson Wolfire**, Grade 7

*Parkmont School*

## POEM TO MI PADRE

Tu sangre corre en mis venas  
You left me at age 9  
Pensando en lo que tu hiciste  
Before you passed away  
That very moment when you had me in your arms  
To come home to call to find out you were gone  
Nunca pensé que mi vida sería así  
Papi te extraño  
I wish you were here  
I've faced so much knowing that if you were here it would've  
never happened  
No soy perfecta  
Necesito a tu presencia  
There is so much I would tell you if I could only see you one  
last time  
You faced many challenges  
Y sé que díos tuvo su proposito  
But I still wonder  
What would life be like if you were here?  
Would I still cry myself to sleep wanting better?  
Feeling like a failure to you and my mother?  
You left me with your own flesh and blood but they can't do  
what you did  
2 of them disappeared and the only one left is your smallest son  
The one I look out for day and night as you taught me  
I think of you every day as I carry you in my heart  
The memories cross my mind day and night  
When you would glance at me with your smile  
And now...It's all gone  
I'm keeping my head up striving for the best  
Life is hard like you said  
Pero todo en la vida es paga  
Siempre lo recordare  
Te amare para Siempre padre...  
Un día te legare a ver

**Ivette Lagual**, Grade 11  
*Capital City Public Charter School*

## MY SISTER

Dragging two 50 lb+ bags, an overflowing carry-on, and a shoulder purse,  
She struggles through the automatic terminal doors.  
Dark circles ring her eyes which are still striking, her best feature.  
She croaks “Hey Dude” and extends her arms for an enormous embrace.

A bit ditsy in high school, my sister rarely turned down a party,  
Complained vehemently about her dowdy Catholic school uniform,  
Spoke gibberish on her cell while facebooking and tweeting,  
Wrapped in fatigue from last minute cramming.

Now clothed in hand-tailored suits,  
She casually discusses RB-211 Turbofan engines welded into jetliners,  
Her prior Northern Virginia boundaries now fluid—  
Living in China, England, San Francisco and more.

Laughingly we shoot Mandarin phrases at one another.  
I learn it; she lives it.  
She, with her high-powered job, driver, money,  
and admiring brother who’s learning that life is a bit of a lark.

**James Orfini**, Grade 11  
*Gonzaga College High School*

## THE LIFECYCLE OF A TUNA

A tuna lays her eggs  
The babies don't get legs  
The male fertilizes them  
They don't have a single limb

The tuna grow to 5 pounds  
They like to swim around  
They eat small sardinies  
but not little greenies

They get to 10 pounds  
They know their way around  
They really like to swim  
But none of them is named Jim

Now they are 15 pounds  
The ocean, they have swum around  
Then one bites my lure  
And I'm his juror

Tasted like chicken

**Lucas Rudd**, Grade 8  
*Parkmont School*

## **NOT YET...**

I'm going to a world unimaginable  
Probably Europe  
Mexico, maybe?  
I don't know  
I see an aisle  
I see children  
Where am I going?  
I'm going to die  
But, not yet  
I'm going to college  
But, not yet  
I'm going to dinner with my class of 2020  
But, not yet  
I'm going to concerts,  
Beaches,  
Or the movies with friends  
But, not yet  
I'm going to fall head-over-heels for some boy  
But he's not here yet  
I'm going places  
Different places  
A lot of places  
But, right now  
I'm here

**Amanda Hillware**, Grade 9  
*Emerson Preparatory School*

## REDCAP

the red-glowing sun rose the next morning  
it rose casting rose light all over the dirt  
and settled mud skinned over with frost  
and crumbling clay trying to hold on  
and sparse thirsty grass with blackened roots  
it rose with no fanfare, no herald, no chorus of the dawn  
the air dry, flat, clear  
the air still filled with wisps of smoke  
the sky reddened on one side  
both pale and dark on the other  
the candle-flame stars running away from their boiling tyrant  
king

where yesterday there was chaos  
a cacophony, a clatter, a clamor  
where yesterday there was fighting  
now there only lay bones  
broken bones wrapped in tattered flesh and stained red  
two thousand legs, two thousand arms  
legs in blue, in gray  
arms clutching rifles, clutching empty canteens  
yesterday there were rivers  
now there only lay a silent drought of life

and yet,  
and yet there was movement on the field  
and yet there were footsteps being made  
a single line of footsteps, odd and long and looming  
stepping in the empty spaces, the hollows between the solid  
shapes

the feet stony gray and wrinkled  
toes gnarl-nailed and double-jointed, moving independently,  
legs of spiders  
hands nearly reaching the ground, nearly scraping furrows in  
its wake  
a creature, its ribs showing, its gut distended, gorged on red  
blood

its mouth tight-lipped, cheeks bulged  
a dribbling snail trail tinged red leaks  
hippo teeth protruding  
charcoal eyes and cauliflower ears  
and a scalp bright red, hard as a rock and domed like mecca  
glinting keratinous in the rose light of the rising sun

the redcap stops and slouches  
straightens its hunched back  
stretches its arms with a thunderous crack  
it surveys the scene of the battle  
there were no survivors  
no blood left to be shed  
no blood left to be drunk  
the redcap is still hungry, though its mouth is still full  
the redcap moves on  
there are more battles elsewhere  
there are always more battles  
and the redcap moves on

**Peter Berg**, Grade 11  
*The Lab School of Washington*

## MY LAST MEMORY

*For my brother.*

The last memory I have is stored.  
I saw someone's face...  
Not his.  
Did they change it?  
Sew his lips shut?  
And put him in clothes that  
only my mom could ever make him put on?  
The makeup he would wear  
only to joke around in?

They changed him.

My last memory was nothing good.  
Last look?  
Nope, I will survive off the memories I had with him.  
Service?  
I didn't want to hear it.

He was my protector.  
He will be in my heart.  
But that boy in the casket wasn't him.  
I will fight for the memories  
But not that last one.

**Sasha Stinson**, Grade 9  
*KIPP DC College Preparatory School*

## BEAUTIFUL PAIN

This pain is far beyond measure  
I want to fill my soul with this pain.  
It hurts but in a good way.  
This pain is a high I cannot get off of  
and I refuse to get off of it.  
I may be a Masochist but this feeling satisfies me.  
I have come too far to run away from it now.  
It is like when you stick yourself with a rose's thorn  
and you do it over and over again.  
But this pain is the most beautiful thing I have  
Ever felt. If I could describe this feeling  
In one word, it would be Love.

**Kayla Brown, Grade 8**  
*Calvary Christian Academy*

# THROUGH THE WINDOW

Gazing out at the world  
Through those two small blue-green eyes  
She sees all the aspects of the world,

The world her parents tried to hide from her  
But now she knows the truth.  
Graffiti, asphalt, the endless train tracks  
Stain her eyes, her memory

So this is what the rest of America looks like  
Outside the small bubble she lives in

This is what America looks like  
She expected more,  
But this is it.

**Rachel Blatt**, Grade 6  
*Sidwell Friends School*

## **WOMEN**

There are women with souls of gold  
And whips for lips  
Her skin stained black,  
For bold looks  
She fights and  
She fights  
Even though she's beaten inside  
She fights and  
She fights for every right  
There are women with souls of gold  
And whips for lips  
Her skin stained black,  
For bold looks.

**Keterina Clacks**, Grade 9  
*Benjamin Banneker Academic High School*

## **BODY MOVING**

She talks with her hands and legs.  
She moves like paper outside  
in the wind. Boys go crazy when  
they see her move. Her hand goes  
to the left, her legs to the right.

She don't say anything;  
her body does all the talking.  
She has light skin, pretty hands—  
nails always done—  
smells like flowers.

Her hands tell her body  
what to do. Without her hands,  
her body don't have a clue.

Her hands go to the right,  
her legs go to the left. She moves  
like flowers in the wind.

**Seané Hamiel, Grade 8**  
*Charles Hart Middle School*

## AND ALSO WITH YOU

Chipped tooth grins were always his favorites—  
the way they broke the rows of screen-door  
porches into splinters  
the spines of dry phrases into rust.  
“Tell me what the street names are,”  
that divide your wrinkled palm into  
East and Spring. Chipped tooth grins  
always stained my cold mouth.  
And soon I heard that love was blind, so I began  
to slowly sketch the weight of your breath  
in Braille, leaving empty pieces splintered  
across the carpet. Undressing the hushed corners  
I spun you and you untangled me: crimson,  
on heaps of frozen earth.

**Ellie Forman**, Grade 12  
*National Cathedral School*

## THE COLD WINDS STILL BLOW

up from lonesome steel sidewalks there's a million similar faces woven into grey tapestry of morning heroics and kind handshakes but still glaze falls onto donuts and eggs fry in diners.../

### and still the cold wind blows

earl the bum sits with his black graveyard gums and doesn't think about anything but cigarettes after all what is there to be thought about...

gentlemen ride in Rolls Royces over bumpy circles into hidden temples but don't need to be given flyers, their mustaches have to be waxed/

### but still the cold wind blows

dogs barking and tearing at yesterday's trash while trashmen rub sand from out of their eyes aching for payday but not knowing what it's like to be a dog...

to be down and mad and not know why anything happens but just that it does/

### and still the cold wind blows

the plastic prophet of l. ron hubbard's interplanetary dream is here waiting for you when you come out of the underbelly...

he has important information to pass on to you if you would only just sign here and credit card number here these payments are quick and easy/

### and still the cold wind blows

shouldn't it be March by now cries out the old crow who perched in his tree isn't hidden from pebbles tossed by little children...

on playgrounds and in alleyways they swarm around like a sea  
of red nylon jacket strings on a leash all talking at once and  
saying nothing/

**and still the cold wind blows**

while I walk on through the mist taxi cabs come railing from  
the left and some sidewalk sign yells out to me...

don't you stop now you have a million more miles to walk on  
the same cement treadmills and if you go left now/

it just won't be worth it/

**and still the cold wind blows**

norman conquistadors fight indians and other American  
friends on the roof while trainees are taught to write poems  
and paint sculptures of fruit by jon keats and the black james  
dean...

click clack away goes the thunder from the keyboard and  
in to the system goes the memo information of yesterday's  
meetings' notes on how things used to be/

**and still the cold wind blows**

it blows from my doorstep through rancid ceramic tunnels the  
moving rails of Washington town as it quakes and shivers same  
as me...

it blows from the side of the president's great steeple to eric  
cantor's & john boehner's tribal campfire spaces/

no;

no matter who you are or what you do you still have a liver  
and can't quite get out of the wind/it blows on, on, and on, on  
again, no gold shield or silver stake to protect you from icy  
hands/earl the bum

and his graveyard gums might be the president of the united  
states, who stands naked only to secret service guards  
keeping someone from peeing on his fire hydrant/

I was a little hasty when I said everything was perfect...  
there's a bitter honesty in winter morning naturally and it  
curses with numb feelings all those who try to run from it...

If you turn your face to the wind, it only gets worse and robs  
you of all knowing, so what's left to do but huddle up in a ball  
and stuff yer ears into yer coat/

and beg it not to strip away everything you got

take order, take my plans and take my shoes take almost  
everything if you want, crazy wild wind

but won't you leave me my eyebrows?

won't you just leave those for me?

No answer,/

Still the cold wind blows

**Raffi Ohanian**, Grade 11  
*Emerson Preparatory School*

## **SIDEWALK**

For fun children use their sticky fingers  
to draw on my body.  
When it thunderstorms,  
I get scared and shake.  
When my cracks are stepped on,  
it tickles my underarms.  
I cry because I have no legs.  
I get excited when the nurses come to fix my broken ribs.  
One day I hope to grow eyeballs  
to see all of my visitors.

**Shanay Howard**, Grade 7  
*Charles Hart Middle School*

## REMEMBRANCE

The bird perched  
on the window sill  
Pecks around for worms  
And grain to uphold her family  
Her ribs showing and  
The hunger in her eyes  
Overtaking her frail figure  
Yet the bread left out for her  
Is ignored as she flies away  
The sun revealing a bullet hole  
Going through her wing.

**Clara Pierson**, Grade 6  
*Sidwell Friends School*

## **FORSYTHIA**

My frail what-not falters,  
Shifting with the choppy sea.  
If my wife existed,  
Her picture's frame would have  
Fallen off and fractured like the skull of someone  
Who fell from the Crow's Nest,  
So tall and distant

From this high up one can see  
the full deck of the Forsythia,  
Fragile in the dark storm, casting  
Rain on my face. The crew far below  
All look like fleas—important  
Fleas, with entire colonies  
To belong to.

The salty wind rushes over her.  
She will soon embrace me with rain  
On my face. But nobody notices.  
Maybe, but as a spectacle,  
not a loved one. They would say  
“That Captain—he’s gone crazy!”  
I can taste the salty wind and  
The storm’s rain.

**Matthias Kelley**, Grade 11  
*Gonzaga College High School*

## I DON'T SEE IT YET

1

March

It's warm; it's beautiful  
Sunset rises on the west side of the sea  
not a word from the shy, try not to lie  
Deer are born, try not to cry  
the flowers grow.

2

I was born on March 7  
I see March as a mystery  
waiting for me to see what it really is  
Can you wake up at the dawn?  
I see a wolf made of shadow, with a wolf  
in the night, where there is moonlight  
I saw a bird take flight, not to be forgotten.

3

A ghost glows to show that he, too  
can bring peace to spring.  
Back in my memory, I can see how smooth  
and beyond my life was every day  
I can hear the laughter of my younger self  
and I try to go backward to howl at the moon  
that was as bright as a candle.

4

The sun and moon are brothers,  
but never together  
you feel the heat from the sun  
and the loneliness of the moon.  
I used to feel so empty  
but I found comfort  
in seeing a huge hurricane  
going to the belief of my dream

I sat back and let it show every evening  
the shine of the sun bouncing off the tree.

5

I almost gather water  
that is so fresh to have  
clean to drink  
But it is salty to the taste.

**Desean Forrest**, Grade 7  
*Charles Hart Middle School*

## SIR ALLAN VON SCHNIEDERSBURG FREDRICKSON ZAME

“The clouds are dark, and the rains are wild,  
So gather ‘round the fire my child,  
We’ll close the door against the chill,  
And listen to the wind’s sharp trill  
And tell the tales from days long gone,  
What’s left from the ancient legend of Yon.  
Have you ever heard noises in the night?  
A pop or snap from the fireside-light?  
It is said they are made by a man with the name  
Of Sir Allan von Schniedersburg Fredrickson Zame.  
Sir Allan was snide, jeering and rude,  
Sir Allan was nasty, sarcastic and shrewd.  
He wore a black coat, with flowing tails,  
His fingers were long, and so were his nails  
He was overflowing with evil and spite,  
He preferred to travel under cover of night  
His eyes were a silvery gray like the moon,  
His voice was less than a mourning dove’s croon  
He rode on a horse as black as his soul  
His eyes were shining like glowing coals  
He rode through a village, he rode through a town  
And never unfroze his foul frown  
He trampled a lady down in the street  
And didn’t help her to her feet  
She screamed a curse upon the name  
Of Sir Allan von Schniedersburg Fredrickson Zame.  
‘Though you pass your voice will not  
Whilst your body wither and rot  
You’ll howl and moan through each weary night’  
(Did I give you a chill, my child, a fright?)  
He rode right past with a roll of his eyes,  
Completely ignoring the woman’s cries  
He rode by a lake with waters black  
And all the time he never slack  
His hands on the reins of the horse till they stood  
By a tiny inn, and a shadowy wood.  
He leapt from his horse and strode to the inn

With a Mona Lisa sort of half-grin  
He walked to the landlord and asked for a room  
Emanating his own unique evil gloom  
He climbed the spiral creaking stair  
As if it was more than he could bear  
He gasped and spluttered, wheezed and coughed  
While other guests scorned and scoffed  
That such a man with manner queer,  
Could enter such a place as here  
But, either way he reached his bed  
And wearily lay down his head  
But only next to rise again  
He creaked away downstairs BUT THEN –  
He lay his eyes upon her face  
Her beautiful dress, her quiet grace  
Her big brown eyes, her soft brown hair  
Her long skirts flowing here and there  
His eyes went big, his mouth went slack –  
Love had struck that old hunchback.  
He ordered breakfast, couldn't eat  
Staring at her tiny feet  
With a deep breath and a twist in his gut  
His head held high, his walk like a strut,  
He strode to the lady with a purposeful air  
And settled himself in the overstuffed chair  
By her side with a soft kind of dreamy sigh  
When from his right he heard a cry  
From the beauty he had admired so much  
She was staring at him and she wouldn't unclutch  
Her hands from the chair; he ran for the door  
His feet slapping on the floor  
He raced to his room and flew to the bed  
But not a single tear was shed  
He stared out the window at the frosty day  
Wishing there was something he could say  
To his love, his beauty, his future wife  
To make her love him all their life  
He stole his nerves, and with a lump in his throat,

He donned his hat and straightened his coat  
He hitched a frown upon his face  
Displaying not beauty or grace  
Again he creaked his way down the stair  
And settled himself in a straight-backed chair  
He noticed her standing at the edge of the room,  
Looking as though she matched his gloom  
With the landlord muttering in her ear  
He noticed on her cheek a tear  
And was quite surprised when with a nod of her head,  
She gave him a look like she wanted him dead  
The landlord shot him a look of disdain  
And, looking as though every step caused her pain  
Moving as though he was something vile  
She walked to his table with a falsely bright smile  
'Hello sir,' she said quite politely  
'My name is Evelyn Lindsay Nightly.'  
She paused for a moment, then said, 'Who,  
If you don't mind me asking, are you?'  
He snarled, 'If it's all the same,  
I'm Sir Allan von Schniedersburg Fredrickson Zame.'  
She turned away with a shake of her head  
He stifled a sob and ran to his bed  
He started to dream he was out in the wood  
And feeling the cold more than he should  
He heard his lady crying out,  
A scream of pain, a howl, a shout  
He woke with such a sense of dread,  
That he knew in his heart she must be dead  
His need for life seemed to melt  
He drew his dagger from his belt  
He howled his pain to the reddening sky  
'O, my love, for you I die.'  
The clouds are dark and the rains are wild,  
So gather 'round the fire my child,  
We'll close the door against the chill,  
And listen to the wind's sharp trill

And tell the tales from days long gone,  
What's left from the ancient legend of Yon."

**Jaquelin Weymouth**, Grade 6  
*Aidan Montessori School*

## **FAMILY JEWEL**

My mother loves the smell  
of cattleyas in our backyard.  
My dad loves the smell  
of kaya. Both are plants I wear  
around my neck and in my heart.

They both are who I am –  
the Colombian cattleya orchid  
and the kaya that grows  
in the heart of Jamaica.

I wear them both  
around my neck  
and in my heart.

**DeShayla Bullock**, Grade 7  
*Charles Hart Middle School*

## **FARMING**

A Hispanic family,  
At a farm  
Picking up  
Taking out, green tomatoes  
Two grown men,  
Holding the things  
As they pick them up from the floor.  
Three girls staring  
Holding a pile of leaves.  
Everyone wearing a jacket,  
Standing on the mud  
With a very green background.  
The trees behind,  
Very few houses,  
At a really poor place.  
At a farm,  
Farming for food.

**Maria Gonzalez Merino**, Grade 11  
*Capital City Public Charter School*

## THE JUMP

The top of the cliff  
I see Mexico's beautiful landscape around me,  
I look down.  
The water is so far, my brother is waiting there  
I can taste my own sweat, it's pouring down my face  
The vertigo is too much, I want down!  
But, in that moment I know I can't go back down.  
The cliff is rough and it digs into my feet, it hurts but  
I am focused on something else  
I can hear the people in the line behind me  
Muttering, "What's taking so long?"  
I can feel the adrenaline pumping through me,  
My heart is in my throat.  
Then and there I jump, I can smell the –  
BAM I hit the water with so much force I can't feel my feet,  
I feel accomplished, I am done, I don't have to do it again  
I hated that feeling of helplessness,  
But at least I did it and can't get teased about it.  
"Come on," I say, "let's go somewhere else"  
My brother and I swim back to our parents.  
No one will ever know what happened inside my head  
Up on that cliff

**Philip DiMeglio**, Grade 6  
*Sidwell Friends School*

## I IMplode

I implode underwater  
I think that's very neat  
If you try to explode  
You'll explode to your feet

I implode underwater  
That makes no sense to me  
But that's all there is  
That's all there is to be

I implode underwater  
Why is the ocean that deep  
Even though all that pressure  
Is bound to fall on me

I implode underwater  
This is my last chance  
To see all anemones  
Do the ocean dance

I implode underwater  
What I don't understand  
Is why there is so much water  
And so little land

I implode underwater  
This poem is almost over you see  
Now I give you a present  
Of a sea anemone

**Tala Jordan**, Grade 7  
*Calvary Christian Academy*

## MIXED FEELINGS

Distraught feelings appear when obnoxious words escape his lip.

I feel like defending your honor, by drawing all power from my hip.

When I reject fighting in mind, my window reflection calls me a punk.

The thing is, I feel like I'm on the biggest mountain, then in quicksand I've sunk.

I am as tough as an out of control steamroller, yet without the will.

So I stand up and go after him with no regrets like in *Kill Bill*.

The boy gets up as well and confronts me halfway there.

I ball my fists while he starts to laugh and I swing back, let go, toward his hair.

He steps back and I don't let up – left/right left/right – my fists fly with no time for him to react.

But of course, I slip up and he takes that chance for his turn to act.

I get punched in the gut and it doesn't cause a stain.

He feels uncanny, because he does not understand why I don't feel any pain.

I let out months of bullying with two more attacks at his gut.

Ignoring the self-control lecture of the World UFC champion, I kick his butt.

My finishing move is an elbow to the head as he bends over for air.

My teacher walks in to see his one hit and my pair.

In the same window, the same reflection says, "You're a great fighter!"

I say, "You wanna go? Nevermind! Get in ya weight class, son! I think you're lighter."

**Shavar Clarke**, Grade 7  
*Parkmont School*

# FOX

Falsetto footsteps pace through the powder-like snow scape.  
The exordium of the day has passed,  
and the fox has found his prey at last.  
Harbored in the shrub,  
his temporary shelter.

The fox's licorice eyes are like bottomless pits,  
similar to his stomach, empty.  
Soon the rabbit might fill this void,  
for the fox seems lean, these winter months are sparse.

This rabbit rests, he might never wake.  
A burnt orange blaze, a stain in the snow, the fox has filled his  
plate.

**Joe Dahut**, Grade 11  
*Gonzaga College High School*

## NATURE

a jet in the sky flying fast  
like an eagle,  
dog prints in concrete  
left by a beagle  
squirrel!  
squirrel!  
black squirrel!  
the squirrels are working  
collecting acorns.  
trees standing  
tall and strong  
in the wintry cold.

**Tomas Rodriguez**, Grade 6  
*Parkmont School*

## MY HAIR

My hair is like wildness  
a pile of wet roots, an exotic thing  
drawn to always be cute.  
Me looking back and my mom telling me:  
Girl, please don't move  
Please let me braid my fingers through your hair  
and reach the naps and dry roots  
Please let me throw some grease on it so I can rest my bones  
and go to sleep when I am done  
Let earth go to your hair and let nutrients go too  
because your hair is a title that comes from way back when  
Your hair is Harriet Tubman  
nappy, break the comb and back of the bus  
nappy too.  
Baby stop, follow directions,  
move your head to the left  
then right.  
Baby, you can watch it later, so baby please don't move.  
My hair hurts when my mom tugs and pulls  
and puts rubber bands too.  
But when it's all said and done, my hair is splendid  
and full of beauty.  
My hair is a part of things  
even from way back when.  
My hair is also a part of my body  
like dark skin.

**Ladeisha Meriweather**, Grade 7  
*Charles Hart Middle School*

## THIRD GRADE

I was only in third grade when  
I saw a homeless man.  
I watched as the old black man said to my mom  
“I need some food, may  
I borrow some money, ma’am?”  
I heard my mom say, “No, sorry.”  
I walked away with her and  
I asked her who that man was.  
“I don’t know,” she said.  
I did not respond, but  
I wondered why she didn’t give him money.  
I immediately thought about my third grade classmates.

We always shared lunch when  
We forgot ours, and  
We even gave each other different crayons  
We had. We were all friends, and why would  
We ever deny helping people that need it.  
We always shared money. Almost every day,  
We tossed around quarters to needy kids like  
We didn’t understand the value of them.  
We gave out materials like they were useless to us.  
We didn’t think much of what we did.  
We thought it was really simple, actually.  
We were only in third grade.

**Jimmy Davis**, Grade 12  
*Gonzaga College High School*

## GET IT TOGETHER

Man, now days it's messed up when youngins get locked up  
The judge a fry you deep inside he knows the streets messed  
up

I got fried weeks before my b-day, but I just lucked up  
Came home a week after that flexing, but I'm out so guess  
what?

It's time for money, get in school and get my grades back up  
My mother said I gotten better all I had to do is try  
I ain't going lie, it got me mad that day I saw my mom cry  
My life had changed back in '09, that day I saw my cousin die  
I like messed up a little bit, but for my hood I'm going to  
survive

I done been whooped, I had been slapped that only made  
things worse

I'm hard working to the death and ain't going against my turf  
I put in work, you put in work, so may the best man win  
And like I said, hard work pays off can't wait to see who going  
win...

**Tyrell Johnson, Grade 10**  
*Youth Services Center*

## THE ESSENCE OF A DREAM

I am the voice in your head  
that tells you to accept your life;  
I am the foam left behind  
from a bar of Dove soap  
that is waiting to be washed away.

I am your condolences  
that you share with others  
during sympathetic times.  
I am the gesture  
that you make when  
you are feeling uncomfortable.

I am yesterday.  
the one who was left behind  
because of today.

I am the shadow  
from the wheel of your bike,  
turning and turning  
but never getting old.

I am the yellow brick road  
that Dorothy walked on  
to find her way home;  
As her glitter red shoes  
tapped three times,  
there's no place like home,  
there's no place like home.

I am the pigeon  
feather, lonely,  
wishing I was on  
the body of a bird.

I am a perpetual dream  
and not deferred  
but a future, a fantasy  
a goal, a small girl  
with a big empire.

**Kayla Rosemond**, Grade 6  
*Charles Hart Middle School*

## **SPARROW**

perched on a slender limb  
leaves fall around its  
dull brown feathers  
beautiful  
in their  
simplicity  
it roosts on a branch  
quiet as the abrupt silence  
after a conversation that you never wanted to have  
suddenly ends

suddenly  
a noise from above  
a coffee colored squirrel  
bursts through the wall of  
shiny green leaves  
head cocked to the side  
beak quivering

suddenly  
leaves rustle  
as it beats its wings  
the bird flies off into  
the pale white sky  
and fades  
into the  
distance

**Sophie Horst**, Grade 6  
*Sidwell Friends School*

## 10 WAYS OF LOOKING AT MY T.V.

I

My T.V. is great, but the less I watch the better my grades are.

II

From the side view, my T.V. is as flat as a skinny person.

III

My T.V. fits my desire from Ion to Disney to Channel THIS in the morning.

IV

My T.V. works to take away all the stress, a needed rest from all the noise.

V

My T.V. is a friend, watching the same shows I like to watch.

VI

My T.V. is an alarm, telling me to dust him when he's dirty.

VII

To an ant, my T.V. is a robot planning to end the world.

VIII

My 5-year-old brother says my T.V. is a giant's phone.

IX

My friend Giant asked, "What is that?"

I told him, "It's my T.V."

He did not believe me.

He said, "It's just a tiny piece of glass that lights up."

X

My T.V. is a square, futuristic dress!

**Lidya Demissie**, Grade 6

*Parkmont School*

# STOP THE BULLYING

Scared and afraid  
I stood in front of my locker  
Praying to God  
That those mean figures  
Didn't come to stuff me in my locker again  
Scared and afraid  
Every day  
That I stood in the dark, hollow hallways  
Of my day  
Scared and afraid  
Is all I feel when knowing those  
Strong mean figures will be here  
In the class I'm sitting on my desk  
My palms are sweating , my voice is low  
And I see them coming  
And fear  
Scared and afraid  
Is the feeling I get when knowing  
The mean, strong figures are near  
In my school I fear  
This feeling will soon be clear  
When I know that death is here

**Miriam Macias**, Grade 11  
*Capital City Public Charter School*

## HECTIC HALLWAYS

Silent in class seated before the bell,  
Mentally preparing for the stampeding rampage through Hell  
Stand up and timidly peer out the door,  
Only to see a dirty, cluttered, dangerous floor.

Step into the hall and make your way,  
But you must know there is no time to play.  
Backpacks are let loose and shoes become untied,  
Just last week three boys almost died.

Freshmen are flung, Sophomores are thrown,  
The staircase echoes the poor child's moan,  
It is a place where no one wants to be,  
Not you, not he, not she, not even me.

Shuffle down the stairs and sprint across the hall,  
But you must avoid the short, the pudgy, especially the tall.  
Spring open the doors and your room is in sight  
It seems you have survived another awful scary plight.

Now you are safe in the comfort of your chair,  
As the water fountain comes to mind but you don't dare.  
Do not end up like the unfortunate rest,  
In high school, surviving the hallways is the most difficult test.

**Richard M. Planning**, Grade 12  
*Gonzaga College High School*

## **STRONGER THAN ME**

He was nervous  
Chipped fingernails  
On empty stomachs  
This was his breakfast  
Twirling ends of hair strands  
Stress  
Testing its strength

He was afraid  
That those nightmares would somehow find him  
During the day  
Recreate themselves within his mind  
Within his words

He was broken  
Shredded to pieces as the thought of his missing love  
Crushed that he would grow to be crippled and alone

I think of him to this day  
In his nervous broken and shuddering skin  
And he is still somehow  
Stronger than me

**Kee'Shawn Murphy, Grade 9**  
*Friendship Collegiate Academy*

## DREAMER

Aloe.

It smoothes over the burns, makes it seem as if  
they never really hurt that much in the first place.

An illusion.

But the wound remains.

The skin peels back, revealing  
the ugly, raw, lobster-red layer  
underneath all the pain, a new beginning.

Sleep is your aloe.

Nowadays, your dreams are laced with 'should have been's.  
in black and white, the heavy colors of memory  
because that's the only time when life seems  
clear anymore; when there isn't any  
red or green or blue or  
any of the colors that  
have flown away from the nightmares  
you have when your eyes are open.

Sometimes, you imagine  
a little girl with eyes full of moss  
and rose-red cheeks framed by curls  
glorified by the careful-footed dance of the sunset light.

But in those naïve eyes the hue  
of the grass after the morning dew has gathered,  
you see a falter. The girl's mask  
falls. Just for a minute, but it's there and you catch it  
as it cracks into a million shards, like glass tumbling onto the  
pavement.

And before she can take the time  
to carefully construct a new one, you take her hand.  
You fall together as the child sighs into the black smog  
"This is what dreams are made of."

**Abigail Bartram**, Grade 10  
*National Cathedral School*

## THE PARK POETIC

In the breeze, two walk  
In the grass we lay  
With the smallest of  
creatures we lay  
Some sit across, on wooden perches  
Neither  
bothering the other  
Eyes closed and noses open  
Taking in the  
scents and sounds of Spring  
Birds chirp and Squirrels squirrel  
Both undisturbed in their own world  
Sun on our backs brings  
joy untold  
For now we have no walls  
Look towards the sky,  
where did the ceiling go?

**Jordan Harris Reid**, Grade 12  
*Emerson College Preparatory School*

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Parkmont Poetry Festival extends sincere thanks to our 2013 judges:

**Anne Harding Woodworth's** poetry is published online and in journals such as *Cimarron*, *Potomac Review*, *Byline*, and *Painted Bride Quarterly*. She is the author of three books of poetry and has recently completed an MFA in poetry at Fairleigh Dickinson University. She lives in Washington, D.C., where she is a member of the Poetry Board at the Folger Shakespeare Library.

**Carlos Parada Ayala** is a recipient of Washington, DC's Commission on the Arts Larry Neal Poetry Award and co-editor of the anthology *Al pie de la Casa Blanca: Poetas hispanos de Washington*, DC, published by the North American Academy of the Spanish Language (New York, 2010.) His latest book of poetry is *La luz de la tormenta/The Light of the Storm* (Zozobra Publishing, Maryland, 2013).

**Jean Nordhaus** earned an undergraduate degree in philosophy from Barnard College and a PhD in German literature from Yale University. She is the author of the poetry chapbook *A Language of Hands* (1982) as well as the collections *A Bracelet of Lies* (1987), *The Porcelain Apes of Moses Mendelssohn* (2002), and *Innocence* (2006). She has been the poetry coordinator for the Folger Shakespeare Library's poetry programs and has taught at the Writer's Center in Bethesda, Maryland. She lives in Washington, DC.

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## **PARKMONT SCHOOL**

Parkmont is a small private school serving middle school students in grades 6-8 and upper school students in grades 9-12. An educational community that fosters individual growth and enthusiasm for learning, Parkmont believes that there is nothing more basic to the development of a person than a positive sense of self-esteem. This respect for the creative energies and contributions of young people is the driving force behind the Poetry Festival and many other school activities. Parkmont's Internship program puts students in offices, shops and organizations around the city to learn practical work skills. At school, students participate in all-school meetings that focus on ethical and practical problems confronting their community and engage in a vibrant, hands-on curriculum. Parkmont helps students to discover their talents and values. The Poetry Festival encourages students to give voice to their dreams and concerns.

If you would like to show your support for the Parkmont Poetry Festival by making a tax-deductible contribution in any amount, please send a check payable to Parkmont School to this address:

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