



Capitol Cadences

A Collection from Young Washington Poets

2021 Edition

Welcome!



On behalf of the Junior League of Washington, we are pleased to host the 22nd Annual Youth Poetry Contest for DC public and charter school students in grades 4 through 8.

The purpose of the contest is to encourage young authors to explore reading and poetry by submitting original work on any topic of personal significance. With the JLW's focus on helping children develop and improve their literacy skills, it truly is inspiring to read the collection of poems on the pages that follow.

We would like to thank all the students and teachers who participated in the contest this year and congratulate our winners.

Best regards,

Poetry Contest Staff
Community Outreach Committee
Junior League of Washington

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**Bold indicates first place winner*

Fourth Grade

We Can Smile

Chloe Carrdus

School Without Walls at Francis Stevens

The grass is growing
The bells are ringing
It's not snowing!
The birds are singing
Almost all is well now
We can smile!

We are happy, everyone knows how...
...It makes winter all worthwhile
Spring has come with a POW!
And now we can smile!

Life

Arianna Bilal-Threats
School Without Walls at Francis Stevens

When you are born,
you are loved.
By your mom and dad,
your aunts,
your uncles,
and many more.
When you are 10,
you'll be different.
You will have new things,
new knowledge,
new love.
When you are 20,
you may have kids,
sweet like honey.
When you see your loved ones,
you dread the day you die.
When you are 30,
You will have a new house,

new job,
new everything.
When you see the ones you love,
you see happiness,
you see sadness.
You see the future,
you see the past.

When you are 40,
you are blinded,
by the world around you.

When you are 50,
you are aging fast.
Your children have kids,
they have moved on,
you are alone,
with your spouse.
When you are 60,

you are trying to block out the darkness,
of the on-coming death.

When you are 70,
you are alone.
You stare at the empty chair,
the one right next to yours.

When you are 80,
you know you are lucky.
You know you are old,
but still pretty healthy.

When you are 90,
you know you are old.
You know the sun inside,
will soon set.

When you are 100,
you are surrounded by earth.

The sun has set.

Evolve

*Vivienne Brzostek
Capital City Public Charter School*

You hold me prisoner
Stuck in your lie
No light to guide me
Trapped until I die
When I speak
No words come out
No identity
Gone without a doubt
The bars of your rage
Close in every day
You're not my master
But you have control in every way
To change
The only way now
To adapt
But I don't know how
Pushing through the bars
Finally free
I see the world
And the world sees me

Stand up

*Vivienne Brzostek
Capital City Public Charter School*

Push me out
Beat me till I bleed
I am strong
I don't feel the pain
You say I must go
I hope you know
I'm not gone forever
I will be strong
One day I'll come back
Better but still the same
You can't mold me
I will never change

Sixth Grade

Brown Girl in the Canvas

*Marleigh McKay
Alice Deal Middle School*

I am the person who,
Was born beautifully,
brown-skinned, black-haired, wide-eyed ready to change
the world.

Even if I seem like a pretty brown girl dreaming;
I am dreaming up my dash, my legacy.
As I look forward I see me a
brown girl in the canvas.

The world is a blank canvas.
How are we going to paint it?
I smile at a blank canvas,
With opportunity and grace.

I sit and stare with my hands fiercely folded and gently gloved, or
curled around a pen, paint brush.
Ready to create.

I am a blank canvas;
I do not yet know who I'll be, what I'll say, how I'll say it.
Maybe I'll say it business, art, or, dance.
I was born with thick-curly and a curious mind underneath.
With a blank canvas you have a head start,
What is a head start?

A head start does not mean you finish first, for you have The
creativity to get you there.

Fiercely fighting creativity might seem for if
We get too much
POWER, we might find ourselves with

Malcolm's raised and fisted fingers,
Or Martin's peace,
Or James' exquisite words,
Ready to change the world.

At the end of our pointed fingers,
Creativity lies.
In angry whisper we talk of our
Plans for change.

Silence

Marleigh McKay
Alice Deal Middle School

Silence is
Strange.
Silence is
Power.
Silence is
Unknown.

When people are silent are they making a difference?
Are they writing a story or
Wishes for the world to change.

Some people smile at silence.
As a way to recognize we aren't fighting.
Some see strange, wacky, and wild.
It's seen in variations, some good some bad.
But silence is freedom, freedom is power.

Silence is like a bird able to fly.
Ready to soar above problems and sigh.
But to some birds silence is a broken wing so they are unable to fly.

Breathe, as a sign of strength and life.
Breathe as glory inside.
In a perfect world creativity thrives
With breath and silence harmonizing in style.
A pen drops and the silence is gone; another bird's flight has ended.
As breath lives on.

Seventh Grade

The Heartbreaking Loss

Amohri Taylor
KIPP DC: AIM Academy

As I walk down the aisle I start to sign
Then I slowly start to cry.
They say they want to bury her.
I say no lets cremate her so we have a piece of her.
I see a man hold up a cross
And then he says i'm sorry for your loss.
I start to cry all over again
I ran out as I can
I ran and ran and ran.
The man caught up to me
He managed to say he was really really sorry.
I tell him it's ok
It's not his fault.
Even though she is not physically here with me
She will be with me for all eternity.
I feel like in my heart there's a whole,
I can still fell the warmth of her soul.

Nobody There to Listen

*Carmen Sofia Sarmiento
Oyster Adams Bilingual School*

I have wandered across worlds to find something
I break away from expectations
But never found myself.

I spoke the colors of my life
But there was nobody there to listen.

I have wandered across worlds to find something
I break away from rules that bind
But never found myself.

I spoke the colors of my past
But there was nobody there to listen.

I have wandered across worlds to find something
I break away from perfection
But never found myself.

I spoke the colors of my wishes
But there was nobody there to listen.

I have wandered across worlds to find something
I break away from traditions
But never found myself.

I spoke the colors of my heart
But this time I listened to **MYSELF**.



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