



CAPITOL CADENCES

A Collection from Young Washington Poets



2022 EDITION

WELCOME



On behalf of the Junior League of Washington, we are thrilled to present the winners of our 23rd Annual Youth Poetry Contest for DC students in grades 5 through 8. We enjoyed reading the many variations and interpretations of this year's theme: JOY.

The Junior League of Washington strives to honor the creativity of our local students as well as to promote the strength of their voices. Now, more than ever, we are committed to championing the voices of our community's youth. Their perspective on life and living through the past two years of extreme disruption and uncertainty deserves to be heard and celebrated, which is why this compilation of poems is especially meaningful this year.

Thank you to all the teachers, educators and literacy specialists who submitted poems on behalf of their students. Thank you for bringing poetry into the classroom and instilling a love of writing in these young authors.

Best regards,

Poetry Contest Staff
Community Outreach Committee
Junior League of Washington

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5TH GRADE

JOY IS...

By: Ona Brunswick

Joy feels like a hug after a bad day
Joy feels like a smooth rock you find in the creek
Joy feels like a warm bed to sleep in
Joy smells like fresh cupcakes out of the oven
Joy smells like perfume your mom puts on
Joy smells like a new book right off the press
Joy tastes like ice cream on a hot day
Joy tastes like a meal your family cooks together
Joy tastes like refreshing ice water
Joy sounds like ocean waves
Joy sounds like little kids laughter
Joy sounds like cheering on a favorite team
Joy looks like kids playing on a playground
Joy looks like friends together
Joy looks like giving
Joy is Joy
Joy is Love
Joy is Happiness



6TH GRADE

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MY BLUES, THAT WORRY ME

By: Gerome Wood

I am in shock
my sadness flows in my blood
my heartbeat is in Rome
I can't hold it in forever.
My blues are bad
I can't control it
I am sad, need to fix it
cry, cry deep, deep down
I know I am strong.
I can fight through my blues
but they're coming
and coming
suddenly I see myself
drenched in tears
my sadness I feel.

CHARLES HART MIDDLE SCHOOL

6TH GRADE

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MY WINGS

By: Jayla McMillian

As the world ends, I would forget all boundaries.
My life would be as free as a fresh breeze of air on a
heavenly day.

I would free myself from all unfinished work that
caused wreckage in my life.

I will no longer be bound to the eternal suffering of
exhaustion.

As the world catches on fire, I will still be sitting
there

numb, mourning the days of my past life,
praying to be reborn in my next as a butterfly
so I could really be able to spread my wings and fly,
to show my true form, as a caterpillar breaking out
of a cocoon.

To be free of worries and stress,
to just be free--not having to maintain a daily life,
being reborn as a butterfly would mean peace and
happiness for me;

Imagine being able to fly, as high as I want in the
sky

and not having to come down until I'm ready:

This is what I would do as the world is ending.

CHARLES HART MIDDLE SCHOOL

6TH GRADE

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THIS IS ME

By: Tailyn Trapp

I feel alone as I sit in this darkness.
I fear I'm breathless, wordless and apart from my
feelings.
Like I can just disappear in the dark
and never come out of this wounded space.
I don't know when was the last time
I saw my mom's magnetic smile.
I've realized that I'm floating in the middle of the
Pacific Ocean,
struggling to forbid this madness.
It's impossible to overcome this strangeness.
This is only the beginning.

CHARLES HART MIDDLE SCHOOL

7TH GRADE

MY DELIGHT

By: Paris Powell

My width is as a board
With four corners at each end.
My layers both rough and smooth,
And rigid to defend,
That sleeping baby in its crib,
New to this world's lights.
Whose only view is me,
Though my form might be out of sight.
What lies on the other side,
Changes as the seasons come.
With temperatures both hot and cold as that bulb
In the blue flickers with the moon.
But I, who am hinged in place,
Do not allow its cold air to blow into the place
Of that sleeping baby in its crib,
New to this world's lights.
Whose only view is me, and all of my delight.
For every morning when it wakes
And opens its little eyes,
I spot a tear in its glands as it begins to cry.
At the crisp and clear wee hours,
Opposite of the night,
As a woman with saggy eyes, comes to its care.
Leaving me sad and lonely,
Left alone in despair.
But as the owl's wake
And the city goes blank
That baby is back in its crib.
I, then, wait for our eyes to meet,
And those youthful eyes to fall asleep.
As I defend the sleeping baby, in its crib,
New to this world's lights,
Whose only view is in its dreams
And the darkness of the night.
But one day, I hope that,
That child, soon, will grown to be so bright,
Will not only see what's on this side,
But, me and all of my delight.



7TH GRADE



MY KIND OF CITY

By: Crystal Rogers

I'm from quietness,
quick and swift, I'd say
The fog that blinds my memory
burns with passion.
What I struggle to remember, finds me.
I have adapted to noise and no effort.
The older I am, the more I understand.
To keep walking forward means
to never look back,
To shut the pitch-black door
that I always seem to check.
It's the older version of monsters under the bed.

7TH GRADE



HONDURAS

By: Katie Munoz-Ortega

You have a distinct smell
that reels me in and leaves me wanting
and craving more of you.
Your loud voice sounds like sweet melodies
that soothe me to sleep.
The bustling streets,
The whispers,
Your chatter,
Are the distant memories I chase after.
Your green skin ever so tantalizing.
When I'm with you the air seems
Easier to breathe in.
You're not flawless,
But your blemishes are what make
You so enticing.
Your contrasting difference to what
Is considered standard for me is
What draws me closer to you.
You're distinct for my natural surroundings,
But your likeness to me
Makes you so captivating.
Your untouched beauty
makes everything around me pale in comparison.
You're my personal utopia
I've romantized every aspect of you
I have blinded myself to all your blemishes
You're a dream from which I never wish to wake.

8TH GRADE

HOME

By: Ruth Schmidt

Home.
You make that word fill my mind
Patching together my scattered thoughts
Like puzzle pieces intertwined
At the sound of your name,
Like a flame
Engraved in my now-scorching heart
The world melts away as I bask in your warmth
My days turn cold when we part so
I weather storms
Just to drown in your sapphire eyes
As my own meet yours I soar to cloud nine
Like I'm flying in crystal skies and you're
Mine
When you rest your head on my shoulder And take
my hand you feel that way
Like we'll never fade as we get older and you're
Here to stay
You paralyze time when at you I look,
Gazes I held just for you since the longest while
Were the only moments it took and
Your smile
Without it my world would dim to gray
My mind would turn into a prison of stone
That smile alone is worth every day so
Let it be known
That now I'm bending the rules into something new
'Cause you're just like this poem;
Imperfect yet true.
Let me tell you a secret that you never knew:
Home only exists when I'm here with you.

OYSTER ADAMS BILINGUAL SCHOOL

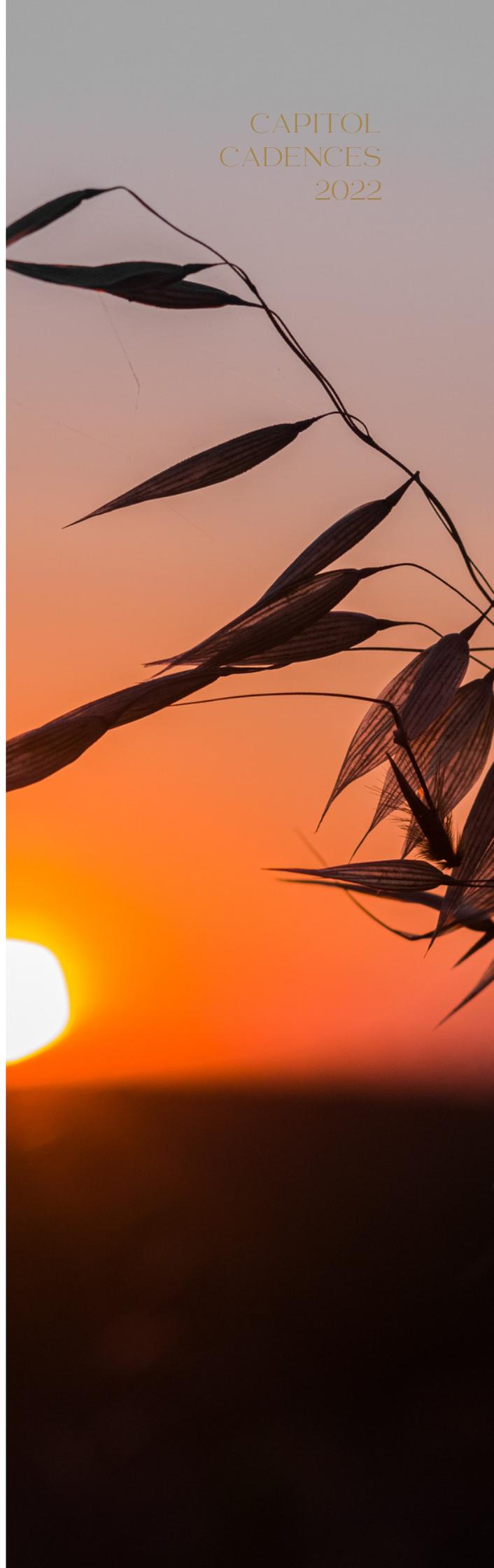


8TH GRADE

WHAT IT FEELS LIKE

By: Jazzmen Graham

I'm a shadow in the night
a creation in the making
a sun that never sets
a destination that never comes.
The way I think is so unbelievable,
my destiny is just pulling and pulling me away
that I would certainly become defeated.
My heart quivers outside my skin,
a reflection that will never be seen.
Imagine being a stubborn, breathless homebody;
The thought of being that person orbits your mind
day and night, like an endless rope.
The language that I speak is so unknown
perhaps it's a landmark that always marks a
mishap.
Eventually, I will give up stop trying and realize
I'm a ticking time bomb that will explode.

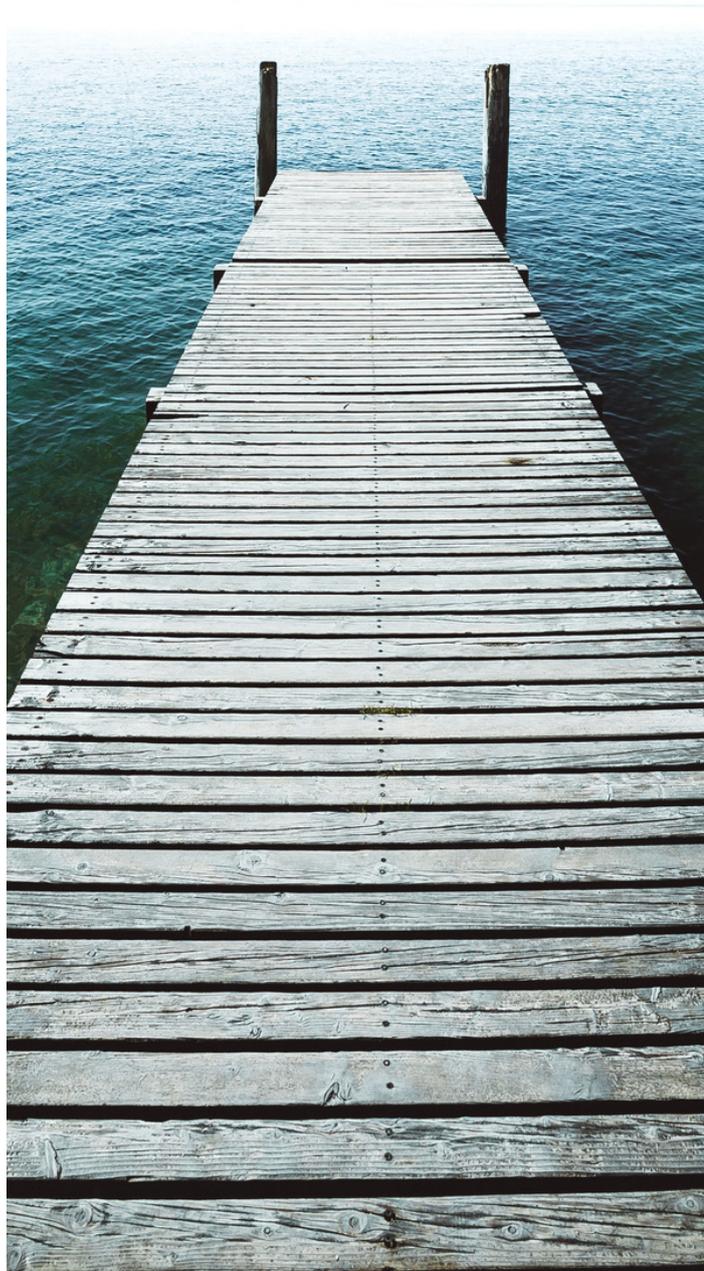


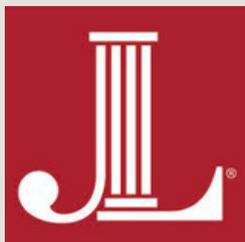
8TH GRADE

VAST

By: Jazzmen Graham

I'm the person that don't put on makeup.
I'm the one who stays real.
Analyzing the voices that maintain my freedom can
be an awakening.
The history of humanity is like the words in my
head:
worried, scared and restless.
The words are getting stronger, more powerful.
I want to fill my head with pleasure
but there's always going to be a bad and good
angel on my shoulder.
Whenever they come, my amber alert never goes
off.
And humanity never decides
to just cradle down from tragedy
and put the fire out.
That's how the words in my head are.





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