Sixth-Grade Poetry Anthology
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Featuring original poems by
Harlem Academy’s Class of 2023

Many thanks to the Poetry Society of America
and our visiting poets:

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Jive Poetic
Chapter 1
I am in my house drinking a sweet creamy delicious cup of hot chocolate whilst watching my favorite TV show. There is a child that moved next door to my house is watching my TV through the window and I don't have a problem. The parents tell him to stop but he does it anyways.

Chapter 2
The same grounded child starts watching my TV again and I know what will happen next but I do nothing to stop it and the parents still yell at him. (pause) Oh well.

Chapter 3
I keep telling the child to stop watching my TV over and over again because he will get both of us in trouble. The snotty brat just says, its not like its illegal so whats the problem.

Chapter 4
The young child does it anyway and this time, I am getting screamed at as well about letting their child watch my TV and again, I should be responsible for something, their child did and he’s just smirking and you know what, because these are the kind of people they are, they cause problems for their own satisfaction, not on such a huge scale now but still, its just not right.

Chapter 5
I start watching TV with my blinds closed so he can’t see and I just ignore the parents because even though they know that their child, they just think that I am being mean to him by stopping
Silence
by Madisyn B.

I am an **immediate symbol** of silence, tasteless and bland
I simply would just rather listen than speak
I don’t see anything wrong with that
But other people like my family and friends do
My teachers **misunderstand** and
My friends and family **assumed** that I **lack** an opinion in certain situations just because I would rather observe
I still think that it’s not fair to believe that.
But I can’t control what other people believe in
Even though I kinda wish I did
I think sometimes that if people know I’m quiet or that I would rather listen to a delicate bird chirping on a breezy cool morning my family and friends or the other people around me should at least give me more time to build up better confidence
Like sheesh, give me a break. I'm trying my best to speak up more for myself
I prefer to see myself as a kettle without a whistle or a toilet without a flush
When I was younger teachers would say that I need to talk louder or more and if I face my shrieking throbbing fears it’ll help me speak up more
They didn’t say my fears were shrieking and throbbing but that’s what it felt like
Well, I don’t think that’s true at all because I for sure know that didn’t help me
Maybe just maybe,
I enjoyed killing that roach. (pause)
He scared my kids,
and chased me.
He basically ran the place.
He probably kept his parts
clean. If I wasn’t so hostile,
he would have cleaned the
whole house. But I’ve learned
to play the game (pause) and
To play it by the rules
without shortcuts.
But then, I have to think what
if he did clean up.
And what if it’s not a him, what
if I got scared by a lady
roach. What does that
make me? A roach to
the roach? (pause) In the endgame,
it’s gonna be ok. I will
get some repellents, or
I will move. Most of them will
be gone, but some will try
to follow.
I’m a basketball
Passed around
Nobody will put me in a basket
When they shoot I move purposely
Do I deserve being crashed around when They dribble
I don’t know
But if this is how it supposed to be
I can dream about being like the other basketballs
In palms of superstars
Lebron James
Michal Jordan
Kyrie Irving
Maybe one day i’ll be there
With the famous players
With the arena screaming DEFENSE
But for now, I’m a streetball
Get left at the park court
I’ve been through rain snow sleet and hail
I’m surprised I’m not broken into bits
Shredded up
They come early to shoot around
I’m the last picked
All the time
The wind took me away
To a new place
Another park
But this is a famous park
I look around and I see my dreams
Superstars
I’m going to be in their hands
The crowds roaring for the game to start
Who?
by Analise F.

I spot a delicate painting
draped against the wall
I didn’t put it there
But I still saw its clean glow of orange
at the end of a long day
The names forever unnamed
saw something,
something
To unfamiliar to call beautiful
(pause)
Beauty is a concept but yet
I still replace this sweet landscape
Now settled in the dark storage closet
In the very back of the house
But always there
Attempt something new
Maybe it will be
Something grand again
(pause pt 2)
The next day I switch the painting
Back to the beautiful deep red and orange
It once was
Someone close knocks it off
It’s not mine but I’m still infuriated
So I exchange it
Again
And again
And again
Wondering…
how many times
This will repeat itself
A Source of Energy
by SummerRae G.

A fuel that goes by the name of energy
Runs the empowerment inside of me
With nothing left to move around
I would only listen to the world's horrendous sounds

I didn’t know being genuine was a crime
Acting like flaws are grease and grime
I love these petite things that make up me
Confidence is charged with energy

Countless careers lay before you
Actress or President, pick or choose!
No job is seen as masculine through the right eyes
Maybe a professor, talented and wise
Grow up to be who you want to be
Thats with the power of energy

Try a new style, be unique
Even if its steampunk, vintage, or chic
You’re not a weirdo, that's just ridicule
Disregard society, you look so cool!
Your style is a stunning sight to see
What you need is a burst of positive energy

Your nothing close to a freak
Not even a loser, sore and weak
Reject every ounce of toxic masculinity
Cheers to the power of energy!
Murder
by Jolein K.

Written by the murder of crows who pushed me away
from their tart messy words,
Inflicted and used as their own pleasure
Gawking at the ignorance that I call passion and smarts
Pouring through the horrific cracks of our broken society

Don’t claim scars and gashes
That my injured pricked eyes may have seen
Or mind wanderings that leave me back to promising

Perhaps you don’t want me to fix the murder
Perhaps I want it more
But deserving is far from seeing the error in our ways

I am non-brainwashed
From the rest of the world, uncaring and deliberately deaf
I am boneless
with cotton candy perfect eyesight clouding my vision
My problems as large and everlasting
as the dark ocean and transparent fake skies
Will I be able to fix them?
Or will the squawking of birds
with poison blood, that fills their black and beady eyes
No soul detected
Be forced to “help” me

I can see,

The constant
Drip
Drip
Dripping

I can see,

The hurt in the fully existing
Yet hidden sour tears buried behind years
of only perceiving the dark liquid
oozing out of innocence and purity

Why can I see it?

The tiny drop that hesitantly comes through the cracks of the old tattered ceiling
Maybe there is a flood behind it
Maybe there’s only a bucket
Nevertheless
I would be the only one
Who knew
Assumptions
by Sophie L.

Adults assume children are the symbol of innocence
Blissful and bright
Dreaming of doing “Amazing things”
Like being a millionaire
Or traveling the world
But on this earth
I can taste the lies
Like sour candy and ash
Crack my throat as I hear those words

I wake up and see the news every morning
The death toll rises as my parents pour the morning coffee
Full-grown adults storming the capital
As though they were I
A whining child

Showing my ideas to adults surprises them
As though the only thing they assumed was occupying my brain would be candy and videogames
We all assumed that everything would be perfect
Thinking that we would be able to live the commercial lives that we all dream of
Completing goals that will never be completed
Shouting “2020 gonna be my year!” and “It’s just a flu.”
But as our world burned and crumbled before our eyes
I can't help but wonder what they saw
Was it the smoke-filled air?
Or was it the oil that lay down their feet?

Our dreams are harbored and slaughtered
Our minds are twisted to see only one narrative
A deep tunnel with no end
Never realizing that there are so many more
So I can’t help but assume
That like a bird’s newly fallen feather
We are disconnected from our Norm
But still, we must go with the wind
Let our fate fall with the snow
And hope for better
Better than sitting in our homes trapped

Better than hoping that our president
 Doesn’t slip up for the 600th time
Better than thinking about removing a year from our history books
Better than having to justify human life

So as our world keeps spinning and time goes by
The best thing we can do is to not assume
And let the world stay
Unpredicted
I went to a mountain on a bright Saturday morning
I tried to walk up
When I got close to the top
I fell and scraped my knee and I felt a lot of pain
I was hurt and bruised so I stopped for the day and came back tomorrow

I came back to the mountain suited up,
It felt warm and uncomfortable,
I tried to walk up the mountain but,
the gear was heavy and wearing me out
I made it to the top
When I got there I was tired and had a headache

I tried a new mountain on the next Saturday
I tried to walk up the mountain
When I got close to the top,
instead of going the dangerous way I went the simple way
I made it, the view was lucent and beautiful,
I was satisfied that I finally made it to the top
Keep Pushing  
by James M.

I try to strive to become better.  
Practicing through the pain.  
But I am willing to gain.  
Gaining skill  
Gaining in every way.  
Trying to become the best.  
Gaining feels like your favorite meal every day  
Keep pushing, so I can gain.

How much do you want this?  
How much are you willing to lose and sacrifice  
I’m working like I never sleep.  
I must keep repeating.  
I can’t hit snooze.  
Your mind can't be fragile.

Staying on top of myself  
Having a positive mindset  
While pushing through it all  
Pushing through it all  
Pushing through is like having an aching tooth  
You have to push even though it hurts
Growing Evolution
by Alex N.

I was human
And then I was a flower
I withered and became the ground
I wizened up and became the Earth
polluted
Dying, and heating up
I am a star
I implode
Into tiny bits of stardust
And I burn up
Into the Sun
I am now The Sun
Evolution you can't see, but still flickering
Evolution that can hurt you
But harmless for now
It all shows in one way, shape, or form
Evolution is bound to happen
Although everyone's views are different
It all comes to one conclusion
I was Totodile, fiery and bitter
And then I was a castanet, loud and noisy
I was a chameleon, soft on the inside but tough on the outside, changing myself, but instead of changing my color to match things to stay hidden
I change myself to fit in with everyone else
Then I was a peacock, proud and tangy, not scared to show the real me
I was a koala, lazy, and drained of energy
Then I became a mink, with tons of energy

I was a fish out of the water, Hopeless and lifeless
Then I became the sun, feeling confident and bright
I was a star but with no light, bland and dark, shining but in my dreams
Then I was the earth, Whole and full of life, lit up with joy
I was a two-headed monster, but instead of disagreeing with the other, I’m constantly at war with my thoughts
Then I was a Quokka, with a heart only full of happiness and joy
I was a sprout, delicate and small, waiting for the right time to bloom into a sunflower
Then I was a tree, solid and firm, standing tall with the strong winds trying to push me down
I finally see what I want to be
Not what I am meant to be or forced to be
Oh to be a moldy sandwich
by Mariah S.

its the wretched bacteria, living within me
that makes me who i am.
tart and malodorous

i’d actually satisfy
if i wasn’t a disgusting, moldy sandwich.

if you’re looking, you can always spot me
in the abandoned alley trash bins
where my biggest fans are flies

only praising my putrid scent.

and this wasteful life? not fair.
i’m so sickening, useless disease;
no, literally
you can’t disagree.

i could’ve, no, should’ve had a chance
a chance of being useful
if i were a human being
everyone on this planet needs something to do
to contribute to this world

but why do i strive to be
the hangry humans, who brought me life??
with the only intention
to use me for their own purposes

their starved mouths
craving attention
fully consumed by hunger.
with the only instincts to eat, eat, eat.

until a better substitute is found
and i stay in the dark depths of the counter
from the dull days and days of waste
i become who i am now; a moldy sandwich

if the hungry ones ate me
i’d finally feel used.
but, some things i still ponder about.
but what would happen?
how would it benefit?
wouldn’t i just disappear into nothingness?
wouldn’t my dull life just end?

oh.
well, so, sometimes being useless is right.
there’s not a reason anymore to put up a fight
well, that’s probably why
it was meant to be. for:
survival!
The life of a car
by Kennedy S.

I am a car, yes a car
You may think my life is very boring
But, I have exciting things to tell yall nasty humans.
Today my owner was SOOO mean because she
Parked me outside in the freezing, cold, rain
And didn’t even think to park me in the garage!
Nasty humans, I hate it.
They sit in me with their dirty rears,
roll my tires in mud and dirt,
When I get too dirty, smelly, or even look the slightest bit bad, they take me to the excruciatingly painful CAR WASH!
The bristles stick me in the trunk and the water gets in my eyes. DO humans KNOW I HAVE FEELINGS TOO?
Finally after a while the smelly, mean humans abandon you for your Enemy LAMBORGHINI I swear
It seems I’m not wanted…
humans just leave you with a big blue sticker saying “CAR FOR SALE CALL ME” but, if your owner doesn’t like you they take you to the dump and they crush you until
You can’t feel your toes, or even any part of your body
Or, if your owner is nice enough they will
Lend you to a close friend
But, my owner gave me to her smelly uncle who eats junk in me,
Sleeps in me and sometimes FARTS
I have been counting the days my owner
Comes back from her business trip to Canada
BECAUSE I CAN’T TAKE this TOURTURE ANYMORE!
AND I’M STARTING TO THINK I’M STUCK WITH HIM
It’s like a literal jail in here. Between me and the person who’s reading this, I’m pretty sure that he hasn’t taken a shower in WEEKS
Recently I got a broken tire and I have been feeling so…. hollow
Also, I’m pretty sure that my owners uncle rolled me in something squishy and
I need to puke
I have dreamed about becoming a lamborghini and it never worked. I GIVE UP!
I wish that I were human also so I could just run away
I’m way too clingy to be left without my dear owner
Yesterday, I saw a car with shattered glass and the owner didn’t seem to care much about it
Ohhhh how I miss the taste of sweet perfumes and elegance
But for now, I get the smell of rotten cheese and other stinky things.
I’m starting to break down every night in tears which is making me spew out gas every time I cry.
When I woke up to the smell of something fresh I was jumping with joy!
I was reunited with my owner, and her uncle was never to be seen again!
Change
by Adeyemi S.

I was a child playing with toy guns and friends,
then I was put to the test as a general in the army defending my country in the war that has killed
and injured many.

I was a blank canvas, just your average white piece of fabric.
Then I was splattered, brushed and soaked into paint and became an exquisite and
savory appetizer that your eyes will eat up.

I was an a rib cage for animals,
Then I was seasoned, turned into a delicious, savory, barbeque, smoked, and tasty meal for all
called ribs.

I was once a leg of a chicken,
Then I was fried and and seasoned too be turned into one of the most popular foods in the world,
They call me fried Chicken.

I was once forgotten foods thrown too enslaved people,
Then they coaxed, immersed, and drowned me into a sauce with a variety of seasonings and
called me soul food.

I was once an odd solid called jello, all kids would have me in their lunchbox at school. Now I
am forgotten, bitter, tasteless, and rotten.

I was negativity bringing people down along with myself.
Wrapped in warmness and acceptance I fought back but finally gave up to the power of
positivity.

I was darkness in the night, causing no one to see.
Then the moon and the sun came together to reflect light in the night causing me to die.

I am a divided country America is my name,
I have dreamt and dreamt for the sound of peace in my name.
Then I wake up to the reality of racism, discrimination and so much more.

I am evolution. I am that thing causing the good and the bad. Evolution tastes like a soft, moist
homemade cupcake that fills your soul with joy. Evolution feels like the chill you get on a cold
cold day. Evolution is disrespectful and rude, but also it is kind and helpful. I am unknown but at
the same time popular. I am foolish but wise.

I am positivity. The one that makes all kind things. The one trying to fight negativity and
darkness away from you.
Rising high above the air.
Like a shining balloon above the clouds
People might try to bring this balloon down
   They may throw rocks
   at it and throw dirt
   But they'll miss,
they can jump to grab it but
gravity will weight them down
they can climb to it but
This balloon rise high
above their reach.
Off the concrete dusty
ground this balloon rises.
Through the air this balloon rises.
Above the clouds this balloon rises.
Into space this balloon rises.
Through the sun this balloon rises.
Into the stars this balloon rises
because thats what the balloon is.
   Thats exactly what it is.
This balloon is a bright shining star.
The Flaws That Shield
Sidney S.

They splatter poor in the dark gut of your name

Your shielding skin is your name
Your name is your bitter purpose

That purpose is a bumpy job
And that job is a heavy responsibility

Your wealth is your selfish pride
And your pride means the whole world to you

The bitter pain that hurts the ones you love
Leaves painful scars in their minds

Society teaches you that you have to get good grades to pass school
And to meet your parent’s frigid eye

But do our parents really know what goes on in our fragile minds,
When we put our pencils to paper?

When we have to stay up late nights with heavy eyes,
working our minds to its a solid core
Just to hear “you could have done better”.

It seems like they don’t care what you go through to complete an assignment.

They just care if your work is submitted and is approved by the teacher.

They don’t see the hard work it took you to get a good score on your report card.

They just care about how high the number is.

They always say “when I was your age I got straight A’s”.

Well, parents, did you have to do school in a pandemic?
Did you have to sit in front of a screen for long hours doing work that you probably wouldn’t get appreciated for?

Parents have to remember doing school during a pandemic isn’t easy at all.
Learning in front of a screen at home with a lot of distractions is very mind consuming
Why is society teaching us these things?
Do they not want us to feel good about ourselves?
To feel that we deserve as much as other people?
Why do people get happiness out of other’s sadness?
Are they going through something?
Were they taught differently?