

**STUDENT DIVISION POEMS:**

**FIRST PLACE, COLLEGE:**

**WE DON'T NEED TO TALK**

You don't have to talk  
about it.

You don't need to use  
words.

I am fine in your presence,  
or your silence.

I can coast on the daydreams,  
and the subtleties,  
of an implied conversation.

So loud yet unheard.

I am fine just being here,  
and knowing you.

**Deborah N Vallejo**  
Kalona, IA  
Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids

**FIRST HONORABLE MENTION, COLLEGE:**

**BLUE FOR YOU**

Beneath the azure sky, whispers of the sea,  
A symphony of blues, vast and wild and free.  
Cerulean waves dance, a rhythmic ballet,  
Brushing shores with tales in a gentle display.  
Sapphire dreams in twilight's deep embrace,  
Echoes of tranquility, a boundless space.  
Mountain majesties wear a royal cloak,  
In cobalt nights, the universe awoke.  
A robin's egg cradled in a nest so tight,  
Azure canvas brushed with morning light.  
Mystic depths beneath, where oceans sing,  
A lullaby of blue, an eternal spring.  
A jay's feathered wing, a fleeting stroke,  
Bluebird melodies in the whispering oak.  
In every shade, from navy to baby's breath,  
Blue paints the world with quiet depth.

**Lucy Martin**  
Shenandoah, IA  
Univ of Nebraska-Omaha, Omaha, NE

**FIRST PLACE, HIGH SCHOOL:**

**weather**

he checks the forecast every day.  
when it's going to rain, he wears a hoodie  
and a tank top and shorts for the sun.  
don't forget your umbrella when it storms  
or your boots  
otherwise your socks will get wet.

she gets up to her usual alarm,  
washes her face and looks in the mirror.  
the rain pours down her cheeks  
and he knows to wear boots and bring an umbrella.  
on the days the sun shines off of her smile,  
he wears his shades.

but what happens when the storm comes with no warning?  
the thrashing, furious waves pulsing in,  
and out washes the fish up to the dry shore.

the calm before the storm returns,  
and she leaves for school,  
no boots,  
no umbrella.

**Kate Laura Kotta**, Grade 10  
Mason City High School, Iowa City  
Mrs. Guritz, Teacher

**SECOND PLACE, HIGH SCHOOL:**

**POMEGRANATE JUICE**

**Does guilt haunt you?**

No matter how many times you choke on toothpaste.  
I can still see your red lips and stained teeth.  
I can still see your smile in shards of glass.  
Your touch is like a fireplace that hasn't been used in centuries.  
Cold ash, charred wood and chipping limestone bricks.  
Cold fingertips, distant glances, chapped lips.  
Every effort I try to light the fire your nails clip my skin,  
and your teeth burn into the pulsing veins of my neck.  
Your cigar smoke can't hide my shame.

My skin is bruised and dented.  
Moldy and fermented.  
You have ruined me and ripped my leaves.  
Plucked me from Eden's tree and left me to rot.  
It looks ugly but I promise It is clean.  
Please don't fuss over me.

We drink pomegranate juice for breakfast in a cold kitchen.  
Fermented seeds in your teeth.  
This house, a prison for my pomegranate heart.

**Belle Glover**, Grade 9  
Glenwood Community High School, Glenwood  
Teresa Lawler, Teacher

**THIRD PLACE, HIGH SCHOOL:**

**EQUINOX**

We sprung and sowed.  
Planting our seed in the noble earth.

We blistered in the blissful sun,  
Happy we were,  
Soiling our wet shirts in the dry mud.

Bells rang, gourds clanged.  
Eating to our heart's content.

Cold came... life waned.  
In shame, we trained

During that wistful time,  
For when that blissful time  
Came.

**Destin Miller**, Grade 11  
Valley High School, West Des Moines  
Haley Moehlis, Teacher

**FIRST PLACE, UPPER GRADES:**

**IN THE REALM OF NATURE'S ARTISTRY**

In the realm of nature's artistry,  
Where beauty paints the scenery,  
A world unfolds in vibrant hues,  
A tapestry of ever-changing views.

The sun, a golden orb on high,  
Casts its warmth across the sky,  
Illuminating landscapes far and wide,  
With its radiant and gentle stride.

Mountains stand tall, their peaks so high,  
Kissing the clouds that pass them by,  
Their majesty, a sight to behold,  
A testament to nature's stories untold.

Valleys embraced by emerald green,  
Where rivers flow, a shimmering sheen,  
Carving pathways through rocky terrain,  
Whispering secrets, a melodic refrain.

Fields of wildflowers, a riot of bloom,  
Their colors a symphony, dispelling gloom,  
Each petal a brushstroke of delicate grace,  
Creating a masterpiece in this sacred place.

**Zailey Bohley, Grade 6**  
Bettendorf Middle School, Bettendorf  
Mrs. Turner, Teacher

**SECOND PLACE, UPPER GRADES:**

**BUTTERFLIES**

Winged, they dance, in a sunlit ballroom,  
Fluttering kaleidoscopes, mesmerizing hues.  
Sending whispers on a breeze's breath,  
Butterflies, poets of the meadow's depth.  
Silken threads of flight, delicate and divine  
Brushing petals with touch so fine  
Transforming poets in the air,  
Framing rhymes with every fluttering flare.  
Once cocooned sleep,  
Now electrifying flight,  
A metamorphosis, an equilibrium of light.  
Unspoken secrets in their illustrated wings,  
A dance of life, where beauty sings.

**Nicholas Larson**, Grade 8  
Franklin Middle School, Cedar Rapids  
Abby Ashcroft, Teacher

**THIRD PLACE, UPPER GRADES:**

**WIND**

How can something be  
So powerful yet unseen  
A restless beast wrapped  
In invisibility  
That is what wind is to me

**Aila Plein, Grade 5**

Aldo Leopold Intermediate School, Burlington  
Kahri Plein, Teacher



**FIRST PLACE, LOWER GRADES:**

**GLOOMY TO GREAT**

Rain dripping down the  
windows, hitting the ground hard,  
blooming flowers grow

**Brady Weir**, Grade 4  
Anderson Elementary, Bondurant  
Sarah Teeselink, Teacher

**SECOND PLACE, LOWER GRADES:**

**SPEAK**

Scared, pushed down by my peers,  
I think *I'm done, this will never  
be made right.*

In a dark room, cruel laughter  
and screams. Injustice  
being made, hearts of innocent  
people hurting.

A wave of courage suddenly  
washes me up. I think  
of all the sad, bullied people  
being insulted and hit.

Blinking back tears  
I shakily stand,  
then I speak—

Speak for all the girls  
and boys, speak  
for the harassed,  
speak for the scared

Speak out.

**Vivienne Farrington**, Grade 4  
Valerius Elementary, Urbandale  
Morgan Bruggeman, Teacher

**THIRD PLACE, LOWER GRADES:**

**GLOWING PLANTS**

Golden yarrow blooms  
Dancing in the summer breeze  
Nature's shining light

**Jackson Furleigh**, Grade 4  
Anderson Elementary, Bondurant  
Sarah Teeselink, Teacher